AUG. 1953

SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

132 PAGES

AMC.

SCIENCE FICTION Quarterly

AUG.
25¢

132 PAGES

A DOUBLE-ACTION MAGAZINE

CHARACTERISTICS: UNUSUAL

by RANDALL GARRETT

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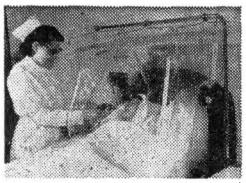

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August 1953

SCIENCE FICTION Quarterly

Volume 2 Number 4

132 PAGES OF NEW STORIES — NO REPRINTS!

Featuring

COMMON TIME

by James Blish 34

It was a wonderful example of relativity, when Garrard found he had more time on his hands than any other man had ever had.

Novelets and Short Stories

Special Features

Interior illustrations by Beecham, Luros, Murphy and Orban

ROBERT W. LOWNDES, Editor

Next Issue on sale September 1st

SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY, August, 1953, published February, May, August, and November, by COLUMBIA PUBLICATIONS, Inc., 1 Appleton Street, Holyoke, Mass. Editorial and executive offices at 241 Church Street, New York 13, New York. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at Holyoke, Mass., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Single copy 25c yearly subscription $1.00. Entire contents copyright 1953 by COLUMBIA PUBLICATIONS, Inc. Manuscripts must be accompanied by self-addressed envelopes to insure return if not accepted, and while reasonable care will be extended in handling them, it is understood that they are submitted at author's risk. Printed in U. S. A.

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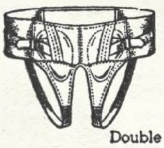
IT'S ADJUSTABLE . . .

It's comfortable, and gives the relief you have been looking for. Just send measure around the lowest part of the abdomen and specify right side, left side or double. That's all there is to it!



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THE WRIGHT EASER FOR YOUR RUPTURE comes in every size to fit **men, women and children!** It's worn by people in all walks of life! It has enabled printers to work on the printing presses 8 hours a day with ease and comfort! It is so inexpensive that many people buy two or three so they have one to change off with. It has **made life worth living for many people.** It enabled people to take part in all kinds of dancing, bowling, sports and enabled them to stand on their feet with ease and comfort . . . more than they have ever dreamed possible!

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YES! PLEASE RUSH MY "WRIGHT-EASER" on approval. If not delighted I may return within ten days. ☐ I enclose $3.95 for one side type. ☐ I enclose $4.95 for double type. (I save up to 75¢ postage by sending payment with order.)

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SOLD ON 10 DAY MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

A Department of Letters and Comment

As I Was Saying . . .

THE MAY issue of *Science Fiction Quarterly* will be on sale from between a month and a month-and-a-half after this is written; and while a fair number of letters and coupons have come in, I know from past experience that I can expect at least as many more before the book goes off-sale. Thus, the returns and comments on the fan-magazine review department can't be regarded as conclusive; I've run sample reactions in the letter-department, to indicate the *type* of comment, not the extent of any particular kind. It breaks down into five categories: (1) fan-magazine publishers in favor (2) fan-magazine publishers opposed (3) unconcerned readers in favor (4) unconcerned readers opposed (5) readers who do not greatly care.

In the final category, there can be significance if the number there is as great, or greater, than the other four; should that be the case, then this would have to be added to the opposition, since I feel that the department ought to be continued *only if a sizeable majority want it*—not if too many don't object, an essentially negative reaction. The person who writes a furious letter shows positive interest in the magazine; even if he swears he'll never, *but never,* buy another issue, the odds are that he may pick up a subsequent issue just to see if his letter was published, and what the editor had to say in defense. Once he's picked it up, there's a chance he may decide not to put it down until he's been separated from the selling-price. But the person who displays general indifference may well be lost.

[*Turn To Page* 8]

What's My Job?—I Manufacture Weaklings into MEN!

Charles Atlas

Actual photograph of the man who holds the title "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man."

GIVE ME a skinny, pepless, second-rate body—and I'll cram it so full of handsome, bulging new muscle that your friends will grow bug-eyed!... I'll wake up that sleeping energy of yours and make it hum like a high-powered motor! Man, you'll **feel** and **look** different! You'll begin to **LIVE!**

Let Me Make YOU a NEW MAN —IN JUST 15 MINUTES A DAY!

You wouldn't believe it, but I myself used to be a 97-lb. weakling. Fellows called me "Skinny." Girls snickered and made fun of me behind my back. I was a flop. THEN I discovered my marvelous new muscle-building system—**"Dynamic Tension."** And it turned me into such a **complete** specimen of MANHOOD that today I hold the title "THE WORLD'S MOST PERFECTLY DEVELOPED MAN."

That's how I traded in my "bag of bones" for a barrel of muscle! And I felt so much better, so much **on top of the world** in my big, new, husky body, that I decided to devote my whole life to helping **other** fellows change themselves into "perfectly developed men."

What is "Dynamic Tension"? How Does It Work?

When you look in the mirror and see a healthy, husky, strapping fellow smiling back at you—then you'll be astounded at how short a time it takes **"Dynamic Tension"** to GET RESULTS! **"Dynamic Tension"** is the easy, NATURAL method you can practice in the privacy of your own room—JUST 15 MINUTES EACH DAY—while your scrawny shoulder muscles begin to swell, ripple...those spindly arms and legs of yours bulge...and your whole body starts to feel "alive," full of zip and go!

My Illustrated Book Is Yours—Not for $1 or 10c—But FREE

Send NOW for my famous book, "Everlasting Health and Strength." It has 32 pages and is packed from cover to cover with actual photographs and valuable advice. It shows what **"Dynamic Tension"** can do, answers many questions that may be puzzling you. Page by page it shows what I can do for **YOU.**

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So, those of you interested enough to express opinions on the matter are not only invited, but urged to vote, this time. I want to settle the matter with the returns on this issue; it's up to you whether "The Melting Pot" continues. One question seems to have been answered; the non-publishing readers who bothered to comment found the department readable enough—but, as you'll see, there's a contingent which considers that the pages devoted to it could be better used, nonetheless.

IT LOOKS as if the author-introductions are liked, so I'll continue them. A bit of repetition can't be avoided, though I'll use what feeble ingenuity is mine to keep them from reading like the same thing we had last time; after all, even though some—or most—of the names in a particular issue may be entirely familiar to you, there are going to be other readers who'll be seeing them for the first time.

BRYCE WALTON was first seen in the Winter, 1945 issue of *Planet Stories*, with a short story called, "The Ultimate World". His novel, "Sons of the Ocean Deeps", was published by Winston last Fall.

JAMES BLISH has been appearing regularly since his short-short story, "Emergency Refueling" graced the initial issue of *Super Science Stories*, March 1940. His novel, "Jack of Eagles", appeared a year or so back, and he's in the first of the Twayne Triplets series ("Witches Three") with "There Shall Be No Darkness".

RANDALL GARRETT came to light in *Astounding Science Fiction* in the post-1950 period, and has appeared several times since then. The present novelet continues the background of his first-published story.

CHARLES DYE's first novel, "Prisoner in the Skull", seems to be doing quite well, according to latest reports, and he's on the last laps of a second. Betweentimes, he's appearing in many of the better markets, and has written a number of memorable cover stories.

MACK REYNOLDS broke into science-fiction magazines dated 1950, and there's a sizeable list of titles credited to him for that year. The earliest seems to have been April; the story was "Isolationist"; and the magazine, *Fantastic Adventures*.

MILTON LESSER also made his first appearance with fiction in 1950, appearing in the November issue of *Amazing Stories* with "All Heroes Are Hated". His name was already well-known to fans who followed the letter department in *Planet Stories*.

TOM CLARESON is a member of the PSFS, which rhymes with "World Science Fiction Convention in Philadelphia" this year, and—at this writing—is teaching at the air force base

[*Turn to page* 115]

Trimmed Edges

We have gone to considerable expense to offer you, our readers, a finer magazine, both in appearance and content. The trim around the edges both improves appearance, and makes the magazine easier to file.

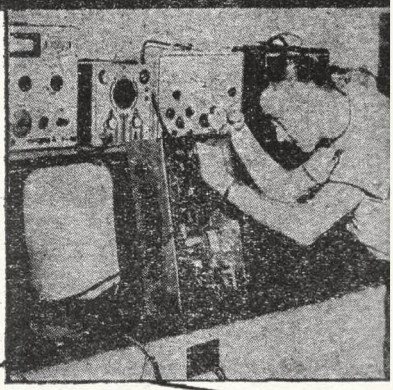
Now we want to hear from you; we want to know how many of you feel that this experiment is worth it. Won't those of you who are pleased to see SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY'S new dress write us a letter, or at least a postcard, and let us know your reactions?

We can continue our plans, including trimmed edges, only if we can be sure that you approve of our efforts.

You get 'Shop Training' at home when you learn Television my way!

THOUSANDS OF TECHNICIANS NEEDED NOW — BE READY FOR A TOP-PAY JOB IN MONTHS

—Says R. C. Anderson, President of C.T.I.



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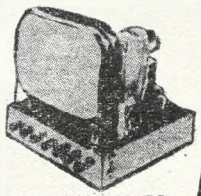
Why waste your time on a drudge job at low pay when you can learn to install and repair television sets so easily! As a technician, you can earn up to $100 a week and more — with lots of opportunity for overtime. There's a shortage of technicians with 16 million sets now in operation. Experts say that within five years, 50 million receivers will be in use. What a chance to get in on the ground floor! You can quickly get a high-pay job with a dealer; open a shop of your own; or earn plenty of spare-time profits. C.T.I. trains you in months for success — at home in spare time.

YOU BUILD and KEEP A 16-INCH TELEVISION SET

In addition to over 100 well-illustrated, step-by-step lessons, C.T.I. sends you tools, parts and tubes for building a top-quality television receiver. You get valuable experience, and you keep the set to use and enjoy. Note that you learn TV—not just radio!



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Instruction material for 5 years is sent on any new developments—whether it may be color pictures, 3rd dimension or wall projection. This feature protects your tuition investment!

INDUSTRIAL ELECTRONICS NEEDS 70,000

Within three years, it is estimated that over 130,000 technicians will be required to install and maintain home TV receivers. But there are big opportunities in industrial electronics, too! A leading trade magazine recently stated that the electronics industry could use possibly 70,000 well-trained technicians right now. Your C.T.I. training prepares you for many good jobs in this field, as well as for positions in communications.

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We have prepared a valuable booklet entitled, "You Succeed in Television." It is jam-packed with facts describes your opportunities in television, and it tells you can prepare for a well-paid position or a busines your own. Discover how easily you can learn televisio home through C.T.I.'s famous shop-proved method . . months! Get the facts from the school that has gradu over 30,000 ambitious men! Mail coupon!

PROOF! From students and graduates

"I have a very nice business in radio and television. I also sell television sets and gross $6,000 a month."—A. J. Perri, Mich. "Since graduating, I have been repairing TV sets. I have more business than I can keep up with."—John Marshall, Ill. "I now have my own service shop. There are two of us and we keep busy all the time."—Vernon Rikli, Wis. "My income has increased 34%; my equipment has increased 300% in the last three months; and I can diagnose 75% of all TV defects at a glance. You made everything possible."—Frank Delia, Ill. "My C.T.I. training was good enough to promote me to the managership of a TV and radio shop."—R. C. Miller, Wash. "I now own and operate my own shop."—Clifford Griffith, Ind.

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A strange costume was standing near, only the brilliant eyes discernible . . . a mummy . . .

When madness fills a world—madness rationalized by terrible logic—how can the therapists hope to escape corruption, after awhile?

Powerful Novelet

by Bryce Walton

DREADFUL THERAPY

AFTER purchasing a wickedly-brief costume for the United Powers annual United Ball which, as the widow of the late Foreign Minister to Eurlania, Alan Morris, she was socially obligated to attend, Dania Morris found herself in a somewhat unusual situation. She wasn't accustomed to being annoyed by uninteresting men.

The little, plainly-dressed hydroponic peasant who was standing in the entrance to her copter did seem uninteresting—until, in her extremely-outraged dignity, she looked into his small gleaming eyes. They were like two black seeds that expanded to larger dimensions out of all proportion to reality...

And the next thing she knew, Dania Morris was in her copter flying to her penthouse apartment in East Washington, and thinking about—of all things!—George Greg! There was no reason to connect the unexplainable meeting with the hydroponic peasant with him, so she forgot the peasant and kept on thinking about George Greg—simultaneously trying to comprehend why she should be thinking about such a drab personality.

In fact, Dania Morris was wondering how and why any memory of George Greg should remain in her pleasure-loving mind at all. Greg, now the world's leading nuclear-physicist, had invited her to N'American University's graduation prom—that had been fifteen years ago. She recalled dimly now that he had asked for that date with a timidity bordering on pathology, and on top of that, had never appeared to keep the date!

It hadn't made much difference to her at the time, because there had been plenty of other more promising males interested in her and markedly lacking in timidity.

George Greg had subsequently risen to an exalted scientific pinnacle approaching the legendary. He ruled N'America's Lunarian Base, together with a small staff of scientific and military personnel. She remembered him as a tall, gaunt, shaggy man with somewhat dull eyes and a thoroughly grey personality.

All of which made the enigmatic resolve suddenly and inexplicably born in her mind an almost frightening thing.

"Why on earth," she giggled as the copter dropped down on her apartment rooflanding, "have I suddenly decided to invite George Greg to the United Powers Ball?"

There was no logical reason; what memory she had of him was as unpleasant as it was brief. Also, George Greg was noted for being a recluse who had not left the Lunarian base for fourteen years. He certainly wouldn't accept her invitation and break such an extraordinary hermitage to attend the farce of the ages labeled The United Powers Unity Ball!

Which only made the fact that she did send him the invitation that much more astonishing, and increased the vague fear of such an impulse to the point where it was no longer vague.

THE HYDROPONIC peasant entered suite fifteen-seventy of the Tourist's Hotel. He stood there, shivering and mumbling uncomfortably, until automatic thermos adjusted to his temperature as he sat down in the big foam-rubber cushions and looked thoughtfully at Darrel.

"Holy Mars," he said to his superior, "but this is a lousy world." He reflected on the irrefutable logic of this generality, then said. "Well, Darrel, I've got George Greg hooked. I finally managed to put Dania Morris under, and plant the suggestion in her sensual little brain."

Darrel, a big blond man—also dressed as a nutriculturist from the hydroponic farms down-river—smiled (a little wearily, thought Anson). "You don't seem overly elated with your achievement, Anson."

Anson frowned; the synthetic stuff that had distorted his alien features to the point where they would pass for the face of the real Anson, who now languished in stasis aboard the *Vordel* (the Headquarters ship), wrinkled heavily. He blinked his two visible eyes that had such a remarkable influence over Dania Morris.

"What are you worried about now, Anson?"

Anson didn't answer. He didn't know: he was a fieldman, an activist. Darrel and the higher-ups did the worrying; Anson was the boy who did the leg-work. But still he worried, worried because he was forced to deal directly with this miasmic, deluded world directly; and it was extremely discomforting. He wanted to go back to Mars to his wife and kids and he admitted it.

He added: "Our plan of therapy looks good. We've got men planted in key positions. Greg's the only immediate threat, and we'll soon have him down here off the Moon where we can get at him with the Shocker. But—"

Anson blinked. *"But all the time I'm running around out there I keep wondering if it all just isn't a screwy dream."*

Darrel laughed, a fair imitation of the way the genuine Darrel might have laughed, before his body had been duplicated and the real Darrel placed in stasis along with all the others whose bodies had been duplicated.

"We're adjusted, Anson. We don't dream; these people dream to escape. But the fact that you're homesick is normal. Just be patient, and we'll soon have our year's time served out; replacements will arrive soon, and we can go back."

"I'm tired," said Anson. "I've been trailing that Dania Morris assignment for three days, trying to get close enough to plant that suggestion."

"Then relax; you don't have another important assignment until the night of this United Powers Unity Ball fiasco."

Anson paused a long time before he said hoarsely. "We should have brought along an entire unit of our own culture, Darrel—something we could go back into, when we want to get our feet on the ground. There's so much we don't know about this mass-therapy. We're pragmatic, and we're supposed to meet these emergencies as they arise; but all the time we're being influenced by this insane culture. We've got to maintain objectivity, and I don't see how we can do it unless we have a big slice of our own culture here to straighten us out. Either that, or we should cut our service-periods here to about a quarter of what they are now."

Darrel nodded. "That sounds reasonable; I'll recommend your proposal to the Vordel H. Q. Meanwhile, reports have been coming in from our agents everywhere; we're still safe for at least a year if we can get Greg and cure him. Only Greg is within days of perfecting this radioelement—so powerful and unstable that the chain-reaction could vaporize this world if and when it's employed. Our detectors on Mars only hinted at the potentiality of Greg's discovery. Thank Lumphoor we got here in time."

"We barely made it," pointed out Anson, sourly. "It's taken us a year to get established, and find the psychological factor that would get Greg down off that blasted satellite. The girl, Morris, is the key to Greg's psychosis. It took us a year to find her, and what if it had taken us—say—a month longer?" He spread his synthetic hands in a gesture signifying, *poof*.

"I know," said Darrel; "I realize that we're dealing with a completely illogical and alien culture, and that there are variables—unforeseeable situations that might defeat us. We knew that from the beginning; we're prepared for failure as well as victory."

Anson stared. "I'm still optimistic, too," he said. "But on this world, optimism doesn't last long. We also have allowed for the possibility that the therapists may become influenced by the patients and by the insane environment created by our patients. What I want to know is this—*how can we know when and how our objectivity is failing?"*

"Maybe we won't know," said Darrel softly. "We can only hope for success. Things are clear so far; Greg's the only one close to perfecting this 'Cosmobomb' horror.

"Our first job is to get Greg."

COLD, VAST, and deadly still, the barren frigidity of the moon encompassed him as he stood in his vaulted study atop his laboratory. He stood there, a lean bearded shadow looking through the observation-dome onto an expanse of weird volcanic lava, spread in glassy sheets, empha-

sizing a silence and a brittle emptiness that would drive most men raving mad. Yet he had been here fourteen years with his small staff of ascetic assistants, and he was not—

Or at least he hadn't considered himself particularly mad, until he had suddenly decided to accept Dania Morris' invitation to attend the United Powers Ball in three days.

It was insane; it was utterly and sickeningly silly. But he was going to do it, and he decided not to castigate his mind unduly by introspection in an effort to understand the motivation. It would probably demand a week in the psycho-wards, and the probing fingers of a psychiatrist to find out; and George Greg had avoided pyschiatrists with fanatical thoroughness.

It had occured to him with subtle shyness that having spent fourteen years in isolation from the normal existence of earth was not a subject about which to introspect too deeply; consequently, a sudden determination to break that isolation was equally taboo as a subject for exploration.

He tossed the radagram onto the dully-shining mesh of his laboratory floor and peered unconsciously into the periscopic screen. He saw in the screen a direct view of earth, shining twenty times brighter than moonlight from his position here on the moon's dark side—where the expanse of N'America's radioactive metal mines lay hidden from any chance bombardment from earth.

And round there on the moon's earthside, hidden deeply in the bottom of Albategnius' two-hundred mile bowl, were the rocketbombs. He had reached a point in his development of that radioelement—colorfully and typically labeled 'cosmobomb' by the sensationalistic press—where a couple of days technical labor could convert those rocketbombs into what, as far as Greg's limited mentality was concerned, would be man's final contribution to lethality. Frankly, even he, its creator, had but a vague conception of its potential for destruction. One thing alone was important: when it was perfected as a weapon, N'America could—in a matter of seconds—annihilate the civilizations threatening it and each other; and the fear of atomic destruction that had haunted the world since World War III would cease. And with it, the psychosis which had reduced humanity to the level of pleasure-loving robots would cease.

Greg had wondered, sometimes, what had happened in the mental evolutionary process that had enabled him to look upon such destruction with equanimity—an equanimity that had seemed just as barbarious and unethical when manifested during the bombing of civilians and use of gas, flame-throwers, and subsequently the atomic bombs during that abortive, retaliative World War III.

Ethics and morality were variables, of course. But also there was this point: what other answer was there? Apparently none. Man's ethical and moral codes were adaptive; and there was a certain satisfaction in knowing that this particular adaptation had occured in time, and had been made by N'America instead of one of the other powers. And specifically by one—George Greg.

OSTENSIBLY, Albategnius was a weather station, with an observatory to forecast earth's weather; with other laboratories, all theoretically functioning only for world benefit.

But everyone on earth knew, down to the commonest workers. In Pleasure Palaces, and Dream Wards, and Sensory Shows they dreamed and subconsciously awaited the destruction which their conscious minds denied as a threat.

But he, George Greg, could save

N'America at least. "Who controls Luna rules Earth," was an axiom admitted unofficially. Composed almost entirely of earth's crustal materials, the moon was incredibly rich in uranium and other radioactive metals. From the moon, N'America's deadly rockets could plunge to earth, annihilating vast vulnerable targets. Conversely, due to strong gravity, small targets and vital areas hidden on Luna's dark side, the moon was comparatively free from attack.

But now N'America's intelligence had reported new experiments in Eurlania with an isotope approaching the potentiality of Greg's development. It was a long way behind Greg's attainment, but not far enough behind to gamble any more with time.

A retaliative atomic war out of the question; World War III had cured that delusion. This time it would be one decisive blow—one and one only. Beneath the sensory facade of world 'unity' this first and final strike was being planned.

And behind all this realization a little fragmentary question bounced around forlornly in Greg's cortex. *Why the devil am I leaving all this for seven days to attend a masked ball?*

Greg the lonely pariah, estranged and alone, slumped a little and turned tired eyes from the periscopic screen. He had enjoyed his distaste for society, and the moon had been a perfect escape from it. Living-conditions here on the moon were desirable enough. Atomic piles furnished heat, light, air and also extracted oxygen, hydrogen and nitrogen from the Lunarian metals to create water supply and adequate atmosphere.

Vaguely, with an old buried pain that brought sweat to his bony forehead and long white hands, he remembered Dania Morris and that foolish, infantile prom. It had mattered to him then, awfully. He had been shy and uncomfortable, but he had tried so hard to be acceptable. He had wanted to like people, and he had wanted people to like him; he had wanted more than anything else in the world to take Dania Morris to that dance!

How could such a ridiculous thing have mattered so much to him then? He had tried so hard to learn the fantastic patterns in which one was supposed to move one's feet around, to the mad rythms of garrish pipings and beatings. But he hadn't had the nerve, and he had never shown up to take her to that prom.

Greg wondered what would have happened had he done so. Would he have isolated himself here for fourteen years? Would he have been finishing the 'cosmobomb'—

But now if he so strongly considered accepting her invitation to attend this 'unity' ball, perhaps he should. A warning maybe of a psychic need for change. The affair would involve only eight days...

When he radagrammed the Military in Washington of his dramatic intentions, he encountered no outright objections; Greg was much too important a person for that. There was tactful argument, but George Greg won. An armada escorted him. Defense-A shields were thrown around Washington. Guards swarmed around him like so many gnats.

And George Greg, one of the greatest nuclear-physicists, attended the United Powers Ball costumed as a clown.

ANSON GLARED self-consciously at his superior. Anson was swathed very realistically

and uncomfortably as a mummy, a mummy of very ancient vintage.

Anson pointed at his costume. "Madness," he said. "Rank madness. I contacted the Europan; put him to sleep by suggestion; gave him a posthypnotic hangover and a memory of a masked ball he will never attend. I changed into his costume before leaving his apartment. May I add that I feel extremely ridiculous?"

"You got his identification and his pass, too, of course," asked Darrel absently.

Anson scowled. "Naturally. Now everything's set for the big moment: our first major therapeutic act of benevolence. Greg is here. Both Greg and Dania Morris are filled with subconscious longings for each other which they've kept buried for too long. I'll tag around after Greg all evening at the ball with the Shocker on him, and he'll be cured; he won't finish the 'cosmobomb'; the earth and Mars will be saved from vaporization, and we'll have a long time to start curing all the other insane leaders who are trying to annihilate themselves and humanity. Everything's just wonderful, Darrel, except for one little thing—"

Anson's small brilliant eyes glowed darkly. "—we're all going crazy!"

It wasn't a facetious remark; certainly, Darrel never accepted it in a light vein. From behind his desk, Darrel just sat and stared morosely out the huge plastilene window over the towering metropolis with its skyways and highways, and monorails, and crystalline towers piercing great soft cumulus clouds.

"Don't bother to elaborate, Anson," he said nervously. "I know what you're driving at. Reports have been coming in here, from Commander Weym on the *Vordel.*"

Darrel shuffled some reports. He raised one and said. "Listen to these briefs from some of our fieldmen. Here's one from Howard who took over the identity of the librarian in the philosophy section of World Synthesis:

'Everything here is perfectly rationalized insanity. It's insidious. It's so rationalized that most of it really has no logical counter-argument, because it deals in a kind of ultimate futility that allows these people to accept inevitable and meaningless death. I want to be released from this post, Darrel; and fast. Sometimes I begin to regard myself as human, and I begin to find myself employing human rationalization. One of the most popular philosophers these people read—when they read—is a guy named Schopenhauer. Read Schopenhauer if you want to understand fully what my situation here is. All this philosophy I'm studying is just rationalization of an insane social evolution. And it's getting me. No. Don't read Schopenhauer!'"

DARREL looked up from the brief. Anson said. "He doesn't have to warn me; I've been out there absorbing it first-hand. I don't have to read their rationalizations. I listen to them all day."

"Here," said Darrel, "is a report from Jensen in Eurlania. He's in the Psychological Presidum there, you know:

'In every psycho-chart on file here, the functional death-wish excercises a strong influence on all activity and attitudes. In every case such thought impulses as these predominate: *Life itself is evil. The greatest crime of man is that he was born.* Or. *The happiest moment of a happy man is the moment of his falling asleep.* Or. *We have never experienced reality but only our interpretation of a facet of reality.* Listen, Darrel, this job is driving me into a first class neurosis with which I have no means of dealing. This is a different culture, and their rationalization

for their particular insanity is so well-adapted that I—"

Anson interrupted. "It all boils down to what I've been saying: we've got to cut our service periods here down to about three or four months at the most. Either that, or move a big chunk of our own culture down here so we can wash ourselves off in it periodically."

"Maybe you're right," said Darrel. "But we couldn't do that under Plan-A; that'd fall under plan-B. And you know what it means if we start thinking about dropping our first and best plan now, before we even get started: it means we're losing confidence. It may mean that we're beginning to be influenced by non-objective impulses that we're not aware of."

Anson brooded. Behind his calm exterior pulsed a growing fear, a quickening beat of despair.

"Here's another report from James in the psycho-history section in Europa," said Darrel, then added wryly, "if you want to be entertained further."

Anson nodded. "I'll listen; I can still take a little more."

"James says this about this mass historical psychosis, for which we're trying so audaciously to begin the cure:

'I've found the point where this psychosis caused by imbalance really got started, Darrel. It began with an obsession called Western Culture, which got started, really, in a place called Miletus on the Aegean Sea. The so-called 'Eastern' thought had been on the right track, approaching mental science first; Western Culture destroyed that approach, establishing the basics for objective science. From it grew what d e v e l o p e d into Comte's positivistic historical evolutionary process of advancing from the simplest science, m a t h e m a t i c s, through successive stages to more complex forms, physics and chemistry. Consequently we have mastery of nuclear physics and its utilization by mentalities having no concept of its own function.

'This could not have occured unless certain abnormally-developed mentalities had carried on this exclusive and cultistic program. The mass as a whole would prefer to function within its mental limitations. We've got to stamp out all technical science at the level attained by ancient Eastern philosophy, and start these monkeys over again, or we'll end up as part of a new nova—an honor that wasn't intriguing at all to me until I started this research. Now these damnable philosophies are so rationally worked out that I almost don't care whether I kick off or not!'

DARREL dropped the briefs and sat there stiffly and uneasily. Anson watched him narrowly and wondered if those replacements would ever get here.

"The *Vordel* sent out a special field-research team to Library of Oriental Culture in Canton," said Darrel. "They had an idea of reviving Oriental religious-philosophy to replace modern technical science. We have to have a replacement. But it's no good; it's dead, buried, extinct. There's no chance of reviving it..."

Anson got up, started for the door. "Just so the *Vordel* crew drop this idea about abandoning Plan-A, that's all I'm worried about. As soon as we get Greg taken care of, we'll have plenty of time to work out procedures as we go along. That talk about dropping Plan-A is symptomatic of our own fear and nothing else, Darrel. I hope we can remember that."

Darrel nodded. Anson was smart for a fieldman.

Anson hesitated, turned, pressed a wall switch. A section slid out containing a cage with white rats in it. From a pouch under his mummy-wrapping, Anson withdrew his small cube-shaped Shocker. He tested it on

one of the rats who changed abruptly from manic to marked depressant traits.

"What's troubling you now, Anson," said Darrel, irritably. "You just tested the Shocker last night."

"Tonight's when it has to work," said Anson pointedly. "If I miss Greg tonight, he might be able to slip away from us and back to Luna. If he does—that finishes our little program of therapy."

Darrel inclined his human-shaped head. "We might be able to find a way to get at Greg, even on the moon; but it would take more time than his research might allow. The latest report from the psycho-ward here says Greg's possibly within a week or ten days of finishing his work."

Anson opened the door. He shut it again, turned.

"Darrel," he said. "After Greg's cured, I'll have to stay with him during his reconditioning process. It's just as important that his readjustment patterns are sane as it is to rid him of his insanity. I suggest that there be several alternate therapists assigned to take over that job in case—in case something should happen to me."

He went out and left Darrel staring at the shifting harmonics of the wall, soft soothing coloration that had somehow taken on a monotone grey without pattern, or warmth.

WEYM, THE *Vordel* Commander, had remained on the *Vordel*. He had retained his own outward appearance instead of utilizing the appearance of someone among these earth-people. And he had never left the *Vordel* where it lay concealed in the vast unplumbed depths of the great rain forest on the upper Matta Grosso in South America. The gigantic ship, protected by force shields, had pierced the protective blankets of various layers of defense, and was now doubly protected by a partial invisibility.

And Weym was beginning to wonder if it were all worth while.

Added to that, was a growing sensation that he was somehow—*vulnerable.*

His position was beginning to appear much more vulnerable than that of any of the others on this therapeutic expedition. And the aim of his remaining on the *Vordel* was to have retained more invulnerability. The trouble was that he was in a central position, that his brain was a clearing-house for every reaction of every sub-commander in the field.

Each of his field-men and sub-commanders experienced only certain specific and limited facets of this insane culture according to their specialized type of research. But as Chief Commander and Coordinator, he received them all, absorbed them all and—

—was being unduly affected by the constant repetition of attitudes that kept piling up and sloping over in the limited bowl of his mind.

Weym brooded. He had even learned what brooding was from a species that had brooded in one form or another for twenty thousand years. Maybe a species could brood too long. Was there any justification for the germ of thought growing in his aching brain that perhaps a world civilization could have grown beyond therapy? Especially when the insanity was so old, and so specialized and so firmly-entrenched in the minds, the mores, the general psychological adjustment-patterns of the species as to almost have become an inherent characteristic?

Weym batted his five eyes, writhed his tenuous boneless body with impatient unease. The infectiousness of this environment had been anticipated. But anticipation wasn't necessarily an adequate defense, nor did it even imply comprehension.

He had felt the miasmic melancholia of their general philosophy of defeat-

ism, pessimism and escape for some time; that was anticipated, too. But there had been no anticipation of that sly, vague *acceptance!* That almost joyful abandonment to grey and dusty despair!

It had seemed so utterly simple in theory; it still was: simply cure the leaders, especially the scientists. Ninety-nine and ninety-nine one hundredths percent of these earthpeople knew no more about abstract science than did their ancestors of generations before. So if the precocious abnormality of their leaders was expunged, then the subsequent procedure was simple enough. In theory.

From then on, always under complete control by therapists, humanity developed only on a scale equal to the capacity of the average intelligence. It would take incomputably longer to get back to this stage of technical development, but the new attainment would be—sane.

But a therapist could never really evaluate his own position in relationship to himself and his patient. Coupled with that was the fact that they were dealing with a completely alien culture in which psychology, to the Martians a science equal to the degree of reliability of all associative sciences, was not a science at all! And in which sociology, the final step in scientific evolution, was as yet not even a stable dream in the mass mind.

WEYM'S FOCAL eye glanced at the layers upon layers of reports on rolls and rolls of microtape. He was getting the basic essence of all his workers' reactions to this culture. Direct reports—*and with those damnable quotes!*—from every field center. From Howard, James, Jahk, Jensen, and five hundred others.

Weym gazed through the *Vordel's* observation dome into the vaporous green of the stifling forest. Beyond this forest was a world thickly populated with a morbid intelligence that declared it was doomed, and which had created such rational logic for this doom that their arguments were dialectically irrefutable!

There was a world death-wish backed by an accumulation of historical philosophy which seemed the essence of reason—within the environs of this culture...

●

Weym lay full length on the floor of the *Vordel.* He was ill. His focal eyes burned. Over and over a tape was saying:

We pursue our life with great interest and much solicitude as long as possible; so we blow out a soap bubble as long and as large as possible, although we know perfectly well that it will burst...

Weym moved painfully. A peculiar lassitude had settled over him, a dull cloud of indifference. And the tape droned on:

It is this blind pressure, without goal or motive, which drives us on, and not anything we can rationally justify.

Weym lifted his hand toward the switch that would stop the sound. His hand drifted back slowly to his side like a vagrant wind...the tape droned on....

●

Weym's boneless body writhed across the floor, his appendages digging into the mesh of the grid.

The tape droned on. It filled his brain with a wild ecstatic fire of bitterness and despair.

Why am I here? What hope is there? Infinite complexity.

Fool! Your reward is neither here nor there!

I came like water, and like wind I go.

One moment in annihilation's waste....

Life is but a dream...

●

Weym's mind burned with the thought, the sudden shocking realization. They were here to cure an entire world; but their own social evolution had developed in a balanced harmonious manner, purely by chance! Not by any intent or reason on their own part. Not through any free agency. But here—to bring about such a balanced social harmony of reason and reality, the cure would demand that the therapists apply *reason*—

There! There was the impossibility, the key to the realization of the futility. Apply reason, therefore—

Weym leaned his throbbing head against cool metal. In so far as the mind is free, it knows the truth; in so far as it has a real insight into truth, it is free. Insight.

He managed to lift his appendage. The message reached home base on Mars by electromagnum: *Unforeseen complexity. Must abandon Plan-A. Stand ready to receive further orders on immediate establishing of alternate emergency Plan-B!*

And Weym wanted to turn off that tape, which kept on droning its futile song; he wanted to, yet he didn't. He needed help, but he was alone.

TWISTING senses into hysterical heights, hypnolights and neuroscents sprayed the vast synthetic gardens where the five thousand dancers moved. Black light on fluorescent dyes gave off fantastic, shifting colors of sense-drunkening suggestion.

Greg felt helplessly trapped. He had finally been talked into drinking a potent glass of *ecstaso* but he only

felt clumsier, sweated more, felt infinitely more ridiculous. And he knew he was boring Dania Morris to extinction. Most of his alleged dancing he was spending on her feet. She was nice and easy to look at, too, in a brief ballerina's costume. Vaguely, mistily, he remembered bits of painful conversation:

"Well, you finally kept that date, George—Mr. Greg!"

"Yes. Some nucleons detained me." Stuff like that. Her voice was strained, or it appeared so to him. And he thought. *A laboratory detained me.* A snarled conduit from which would burst unleased hell and destruction of indeterminable measurement.

Beneath her glistening red-and-white mask, Dania Morris' teeth shown painfully white as full red lips smiled widely. Fifteen years ago she had accepted his invitation to a dance, prefering him then to more attractive males. And he had fizzled out. Fear.

Desperately he attempted a kind of whirling step. She exclaimed: "Why you're not at all the cloistered mahatma that scientists are supposed to be, are you, George?"

No—he wasn't—not right now; but he had been. Grimly he whirled her around and squarely into a fat man costumed as some Paleolithic pirate who was jigging around a maypole disguised as a blonde.

A mummy walked past.

And George admitted then that he had been growing ill for some time; he didn't belong here. He thought it might be that vile *ecstaso*. Queer tinglings skittered down his back. Hazes and tendrils of memory became entangled with the present unreality. He

was a child hunched over a book; outside he heard kids playing; the print of the book blurred, and he knew that the blur was his tears falling on the paper...

The M.C. blared over the audio. "Our guest of honor tonight is, of course, a visitor from the Moon. *George Greg!*"

No one recognized him for he was disguised as a clown.

Everyone was masked here, that was the rule. Ironic—but at the *Unity* Ball, it was dangerous to be unmasked. A drone of appreciative sound exploded. Horns screeched; rains of phosphorescent confetti changed color in misty rainbows of drifting motes. Fluorescently dyed baloons floating...

Dania's hand gripping his arm. Her voice saying, "I'm the only one who recognizes you; I have you all to myself."

The scene was grotesque horror pounding at Greg's heart. The masked faces opening and shutting, and false laughter. The five powers! But it shouldn't be plural; there couldn't be five united *powers*. Only one power. When more than one power danced, they danced a waltz into darkness.

Fourteen years buried in frozen lava on the moon.

He shook his head, tried to clear it. And later he found the girl locked tightly in his arms, her body soft and yielding. Her breath was gasping warmly against his face. "Oh, George! Who would have thought it of *you? A scientist!*"

Something broke with a sharp twang. That was it. He, a *scientist!* For anyone else, such an act would certainly have been normal enough under the circumstances at least. But for him—Lord—wasn't a scientist human? Wasn't he—

A strange costume was standing by his sleeve gazing at him. A mummy.

GREG HEARD a dry dusty laugh. It was his own. Wouldn't people ever get over that medieval myth about scientists being wicked shamans, or long-haired crackpots who had to be fed through a tube to survive and—

Glittering clouds of confetti smothered him. Streamers of orange and blue and gold and red trailed from the five-hundred foot ceiling. A crimson Mephisto hopped past, singing wildly. Greg stared; for an instant he seemed to be dancing with someone else, or rather with a woman named Dania, only her last name wasn't Morris. It was Greg. Greg. And it was fifteen years ago. Dania in an evening gown...

He closed his eyes. Mechanically he felt himself moving around, shambling his awkward jig. A horn squawked in his ear. He jumped and violent shocks shivered through him. He blinked burning eyes; he was blinded by glaring lights. The orchestra sounds swelled, faded, swelled, and trembled. A lumbering donkey brayed past. A Don Juan feinted with a real sword, and a woman screamed. Another woman swirled past in the arms of a dancing skeleton whose death's head stared in mock glee.

A mummy adjusted its mask.

Greg heard his voice mumbling. "I don't—feel well—do you mind if—?"

Things were whirling. And out of a spinning chaotic mass out of holes in a puckered parchment mask, the mummy's eyes glowed. *Odd,* thought some part of Greg, *those eyes hardly seem human. More like evil little jewels. The mummy seems genuine, and yet—*

Hands were gripping his arms. A laugh, "He's had too much."

"Handle him with ease, senor. Perhaps it is the Prime Minister."

"Ach! Do not remove the mask, even to give him air!"

Greg must have fallen, but he was on his feet now. He was pushing, pushing against walls of sweating, laughing faces. Would he never, never, never

get outside, away from these people? Back to—

But he had no place to go. He couldn't go back to the laboratory. For with a burst of agonizing flame he had begun to *know*. Terror flowed from him, leaving him weak and with a feeling of only dim consciousness. Sounds faded. Lights dimmed.

Insight.

He knew that someone was helping him toward the towering plastoid doors where Blue Guardsmen stood with neutro-guns crossed over chests as unmoving as armor plating. A trumpet blared like something rather felt than heard. A nasal voice said close against his ear. "Take it easy, friend; I'll help you out to some fresh air."

Greg stumbled. He turned to see who was assisting him; it was the mummy.

He looked oddly at the mummy's gleaming eyes. In a drunken, doped whisper, Greg said to the mummy. "Listen, you. All my life I've been insane. Insane, you understand that. All people who are playing a leading role in this show are crazy. But I've been the craziest of the lot!"

The mummy shrugged frayed shoulders. "You can tell me all about it when you're home. I'll help you."

GREG REMEMBERED how several Blue Guardsmen tried to stop them from entering the gyrotaxi. Sure, he was an important person and Guards swarmed around him like gnats. But this fellow dressed like a mummy seemed to have a potent argument, because the Guards walked away and left them. Maybe the mummy was the N'American President. The gyrotaxi lifted with a soft whir into the artificial moonlight.

Greg laughed foolishly. Was it really day or night? Distortion within distortion. His kind had done that, too. Invisible beams of radiant energy shot upward, converted the thin atmospheric gases into gigantic neon-like light almost bright as day. The majority of people had never seen real night-time. But in spite of a distorted reality created by scientific whims, the mass still clung to a sane custom. Within artificial day, were created artificial areas of night and moonlight, on occasions when such areas were required for romantic atmospheric effects, such as a dance.

Adaptation, the mass adjusted even to the most nonsensical doodads foisted upon them. But the adjustment wasn't a manifestation of the basic insanity. That was represented by the innovators.

But the mass mind could still laugh at its tragicomic cul de sac. They sang songs ridiculing their own plight. Out of Greg's subconscious swam the words of a popular song he would never have admitted he was familiar with before tonight:

When it's day it's night,
And when it's night it's day.
And when it's moonlight where's
the sunlight?
But if you don't find it, don't
mind it.
I'll love you in the night that
isn't.

I'll love you in the night that's
day.
I'll love you in the night that's
you, darling.
Love you in the same old way.
In the same old way.

Greg remembered mumbling his address, the whirring of the gyrotaxi, stumbling into his apartment. He didn't remember passing out.

●

In the semidark of Greg's sleeping chamber, Anson climbed out of his mummy wrappings with relief, and reshaped his melting face. He dialed the VHF disk on his wrist.

"Darrel—it worked, terrifically; he'll be completely sane when he wakes up. I'll have to stick by him like a leech to watch his compensatory adjustments. There's so many forms of readjustment he can take, as we've figured. The obvious one will be some religious mysticism. That's where these scientific minds usually end up if they blow their top. Also—"

The small speaker interrupted him with its whining code.

"Never mind all that now," said Darrel's message. "Plenty's been happening tonight. I don't know exactly how much, but Weym on the *Vordel's* just announced the abandonment of Plan-A. Plan-B is now in effect. That doesn't change your present duty of course, but I thought you'd want to know."

Anson slumped. The darkness about him seemed to thicken and shrink. *They're giving up too easily,* he thought frantically. *Abandoning the first plan when we've barely started; losing confidence; weakening.* Now what if they abandoned Plan-B dropped to the final and open admission of defeat, Plan-C? Plan-B changed the five-hundred-year program to ten thousand. Time didn't matter so much just so they succeeded; but it involved mass exodus, a highly complex and gigantic movement from planet to planet. Logically, it could only signify the beginning of the disintegration down into Plan-C. Plan-C was an abandonment of all peaceful therapy—an open return to insane violence—it called for open invasion of Earth. That was only the final admission of defeat, because the whole purpose behind this program of therapy was to prevent an interplanetary war!

But Headquarters undoubtedly knew what it was doing. The trend of Anson's sudden thought then, had a dreadful familiarity. Defeat. Confusion. Cynicism. Horror tinged with pleasant relief from responsibility. This thing was too big for Plan-A. Too complex, and Anson was beginning to believe it could never be done, even under Plan-B with its scheduled millions of therapists, mass exodus from Mars, ten thousand years—

"Anson! Anson!" The code-signal pounded desperately. "Listen and act quickly; the report just came in. Something's happening to Howard! Get over there to World Knowledge Synthesis right now. Stop him if you can, if you can get to him in time. His mind is full of destruction! If you don't get there in time, be certain his remains are destroyed. Remember the one prime directive—*to avoid discovery!*"

Yes. He remembered. The moment they were discovered, war would break.

"But I can't leave Greg," signaled Anson. "If he should get back to the Moon—some other adjustment motivation—"

"You're the nearest fieldman to Howard. Greg will be sleeping for several hours. I'll try to get another man over there to Greg. Maybe Summers in the biochemistry wards can make it. Soon as you take care of Howard, report back to Greg, just in case Summers can't make it! Hurry, Anson, for the love of Mars!"

Anson hurried. He ran. He signaled a gyrotaxi down, and stubbornly fought off panic as it took him through the artificial day.

DIM TWILIGHT brooded heavily in that room. Anson stood there, breathing hoarsely, his eyes probing shadows. Slowly he shut the door behind him labeled: *Philosophy—Middle-Age Transition.*

This department was apparently used but little. No projection machines were on. He crossed this room quickly, and into another bearing the directive: *Since Hegel—Empiricism And Enlightenment.* Schopenhaur—Comte and Positivism—Evolution Spenser.

Here was only heavy stillness, and suffocating twilight; the autoluminescence had been dimmed. The walls were lined with file cases containing microfilm. There were a number of small booths with screens and projectors. A figure swayed back and forth. A dark shadow gyrating and swinging with a gentle silent rhythm.

"Howard!" Anson whispered, his throat constricted as though that length of plasticord was around his own neck instead of Howard's. "Howard—for the love of Mars!" But that wasn't Howard dangling there so horribly still. No one in the history of Martian society had ever taken his own life. This was something else, something that Howard had become under alien environmental conditions too monstrous to name.

Anson stumbled back, shut the door. There was no one else in the room. He groped his way to Howard's hanging body, as though through thickening vapor.

The synthetic plastiflesh with which his fellow Martian had coated himself—so that he might resemble a man named Howard, who had worked here for a long time and had stayed sane—was cut harshly by the plasticord, stretched and torn away so that the boneless, translucence body beneath shown clearly, clearly and dead.

Anson's fingers shivered as he untied the limp body. Clutched in its synthetic hand was a note scrawled rapidly. Anson looked at the note and as he did so, the environment which he hated and feared shifted more tightly, squeezed inward, stifling and dense and dusty.

He thought desperately. He might be able to get the body to the *Vordel.* He might block out suspicion in a few chance observors by his limited telepathic powers. But there was too great a chance of his running into a mob. There was another and surer way, though unpleasant. And there had been hope of never employing the catalyst.

Anson stripped away the folds of synthetic flesh, rolled it in a tight ball and stuffed it inside his cloak. He withdrew the phial of catalyst liquid and poured it over the body—

He left the place quickly; he didn't care to see his friend's body vaporize. The friend he had known as Mohlak, but who had become a man named Howard. And that was the dreadful part—he actually *had* become Howard! And Mohlak had escaped from a futile world—much as Howard might have escaped, eventually. For the note he had left said: *The only positive end for man is death. Man's greatest sin is the prolongation of the inevitable.*

Howard

WHEN ANSON got back to George Greg's apartment, there was no Greg. Anson had been gone three hours; but that had been plenty of time for Greg to have awakened, aware of his new attitudes, and to have taken some new readjustment pattern.

Anson teetered uncertainly. Where would Greg go? What would he do? What was he now? He had been an abnormality, a mind so far beyond the norm as to justify that label. But only his personality had changed, not his mental potential. What form would that potentiality assume now?

Anson was only a fieldman. Sociology and psychology were one on his world, an instinctively-balanced func-

tion, emperical. Here, at best, it was an unknown factor even to Weym and his sub-commanders. Anson had no idea, except criteria based on past research of human acts, about what Greg would do now. He could become a religious mystic. That was common. He could rechannel his scientific training into some other field—or—he might even continue his former course, but with different motivation!

And if he did that, he might even desire to return to the Lunarian Labs! Anson headed toward the Moonport in North Washington. Sitting in the passenger compartment of the gyrotaxi he contacted Darrel. He explained developments, then asked: "What happened to Summers?"

Darrel said. "The same thing, fundamentally, that happened to Mohlak. His last report was jumbled, morbid, and said that he was going into one of the Pleasure Palaces for an indefinite period. Those chambers in the Pleasure Palaces are impregnable, Anson! How can we get him out of there?"

"I don't know," said Anson.

"I'm sending Phillips over to see what he can do," Darrel's signal explained hurriedly. "Meanwhile, you've got to find Greg. Guard the Moonport area and I'll send out others to find him."

There was a long blank from the VHF disk on Anson's wrist. Then, slowly. "Prepare for the worst, Anson; I think Commander Weym is also being influenced negatively. Fear has been manifest in almost every summary I've received from H.Q. during the past hour. I have contacted a number of sub-commanders. We have agreed not to attempt to contact the *Vordel* personally, as our interpretation of Weym's releases may be non-objective. We must realize that the *Vordel* is suddenly swamped with emergency requirements..."

As the gyrotaxi rose higher, the rising sun splashed in Anson's face like a liquid flame. He closed his eyes against it; he was unutterably tired, and the horizon held no beauty for him.

BENEATH his cloak, Greg now carried a small neutrogun. All citizenry were granted permission to own weapons, in case of infiltration by an enemy that officially didn't exist; this was especially true with important national figures.

His watch told him that it was noon. And the noon of this day seemed real to Greg. The sun and the light were real. But this was reality which brought himself and his relationship to it into a horrid focus. He was hunted, and he was alone. He had heard the telenews-broadcasts from Military. They didn't know where he was nor what had happened to him; they thought that he might have been kidnapped by representatives of one or more of the other Powers. A councilman from Europa was under arrest for probable implication in the supposed kidnapping.

This Councilman claimed that he had attended the masked ball as a mummy, but he couldn't remember having left the ball with anyone costumed as a clown. In fact, he remembered very little about the United Powers Ball. He claimed that his costume was gone, as well as his identification papers; he was being analyzed in the psycho-wards.

But he, George Greg, was sane now —no longer deluded by conditioned social attitudes. It was Greg and a neutrogun against the world.

He sat in a small refreshment booth just off a five-speed walkway. He could look across the ten walkways that rolled silently past him and see the apartment building in which Dania Morris lived.

He wanted to see her; he had to see her. But Blue Guardsmen patrolled the

area, they were even on the roofland-ing. They knew about Greg's relation-ships with Dania Morris.

His plan was simple, but hampered by somewhat colossal barriers. He wanted to return to the moon, but he had to have Dania Morris with him; she had been part of the inexplicable traumatic shock that had shaken him out of that warped perspective, that abyss of isolation. She, and the dance —the dance he had neglected to at-tend for fifteen years.

Until Eurlania perfected their ver-sion of Greg's 'cosmobomb' he was the most powerful figure on earth. How could he operate? How could he utilize that power for good? Unless he could get back to the moon, he couldn't utilize it at all. But unless he had Dania Morris with him, Greg was psychologically incapable of returning to his Lunarian labs with any expecta-tion of continued efficiency. His plan was a long-ranged one, and he knew that he could no longer live in his former, isolated fashion.

Greg couldn't get past those Blue Guards to see her; he would wait un-til she came out. By following her then he might possibly get an oppor-tunity to contract her without the Blue Guards knowing.

Sensorays from the lamps in the re-freshment booth soothed and relaxed his frayed nerves as he waited. A tele-news audio spoke softly from a hidden source.

"The psycho-ward reveals that electroenephal checks on Ricard Galotere, the Europan Council-man, suspect in the sensation Greg kidnapping, has proven posi-tive and that he is being heard before the Military Tribunal at this time. Meanwhile the 'inci-dent' is something more than that. A special meeting of the United Powers Council is being called at which Europan representatives are expected to defend a direct charge by N'America.

"The importance of George Greg in this suddenly precepitat-ed crisis cannot be underestimat-ed. Although not official, it has been known for some time that in his Lunarian Laboratories, Greg was developing a new isotope, a radioelement far beyond the de-structive capacity of any yet known—"

Greg stiffened as he listened. He would have to act quickly. Another war with atomic weapons such as those used during World War III was loom-ing because of that mummy business. A business which Greg remembered only vaguely. Certainly he hadn't been kidnapped; anyway, it only meant that he had to get back to the moon, now. Once that was accom-plished, there would be no war!

For once he got back to the moon, he, George Greg, would be something only a little less, perhaps, than the Al-mighty.

IT WAS LATE afternoon when she walked out of the front entrance of the apartment building. Greg's eyes softened at the sight of her. A tall, lithe woman in her early forties. Her hair was that vibrant brunette shade with little glints of blue in it. Her eyes, he remembered, were pale green, slightly slanted at the corners. She was beautiful, and he would be inefficient in his new role if he couldn't have her.

She had seemed interested in him last night, and she had invited him to the ball. If he could only talk with her, alone, unhampered, for five min-utes, he could explain.

He moved out onto the five-speed walkway and stood behind another group of joy-hunters heading for some sensory experience or other. He kept

pace with Dania Morris who was standing on the south speed-five run, gazing up absently at the sky. Only one Blue Guard had left his post and was standing on the walkway behind her. If she noticed that she was being followed by a Guardsman, she didn't evince any such sign.

As he followed her, he thought. *I've got to talk with her.* He couldn't talk with any political or scientific heirarchy; they were insane. He couldn't appeal to vague acquaintances in the psychology departments; for although psychology wasn't even faintly scientific except in the broadest sense, it aped the stricter sciences and considered itself scientific—which made it also dangerously insane and unreceptive to such thinking as his new insight had provided him with.

There was Professor Throckman for example. He had occupied fifty years studying the reflex of the human tendon. An artifact that, separated from the whole organism, lost all relationship to what Throckman thought he was scientifically studying—the human body.

Fifty years of insane obsession with an artifact when the world was rushing to destruction. A hermit in a chrome cave. Objectively, was there any doubt of such a man's insanity? But Greg had been even more abnormal, for he had spent fifteen years in isolation developing the basic means to drown man's thirst for self-destruction!

Dania Morris continued straight down the thoroughfare and stepped off onto a tangent walkway. This walkway was crowded, and then Greg knew where she was heading. Pleasure Palace Number Three! She must have spent a great deal of time there to be ready for the third threshold adventur sequences.

This was a very fortunate break for him. The third threshold adventures lasted seven days, and could not be broken. Consequently the Blue Guard, after determining that she was entering there, stepped onto another walkway that took him back toward the thoroughfare.

Greg went inside and caught Dania Morris before she was assigned her adjustment chamber.

He touched her shoulder and she turned with a slow poise. Her eyes were a lighter green now, they widened. He led her to a couch in the shifting harmonic glow of the lobby; it was in a corner, and they were unnoticed there.

Her eyes studied him speculatively, with candid appraisal. She lighted a paraette and all the time he was looking at her, wondering where and how to begin. It was easy and simple enough the way she did it. "Your tactics with women are unorthodox, Mr. Greg. You either never show up for a date at all, or leave them standing in the middle of a big dance floor all alone."

GEORGE GREG felt foolish. He sensed the expanding fires inside him; the new longings; the social consciousness and the love for this woman who had been buried and whom he had dug up again like a forbidden dream. "I think you will understand what I'm going to say," he managed.

Her thin brows lifted. "Really? You mean you'll express yourself in simple terms that even the layman can—"

He flushed with embarrassment like an adolescent. "Ah—no—not that. I only meant that my feelings are such that technical language is no longer adequate. I—I was ill both times you spoke of."

"Ill!" she said quickly, then. "Yes, you were last night. I thought perhaps it might have been the *ecstaso*. You looked very bad."

"It wasn't; it was psychosomatic. Something happened to me. I don't know what it was. It was somewhat

like the old mystical enlightenment perhaps. This may seem hyperbolic but—" he paused—"but all my life I've been a victim of a psychosis, a kind of insanity."

"You!" She tried to smile. "The famous—"

"Famous," he frowned. "The masses have learned to fear and exalt us. Maybe insanity is too harsh a term; it's a social-legal term. From the social angle a man can be legally sane, yet obviously abnormal. And—Dania, are you interested? I—I'm in love with you. I want to marry you. I—"

He pressed his eyes. When he opened them again, she was looking deeply into his face. Their eyes clashed, and there was an understanding, an affinity. It was ineffable, but it was there.

His eyes looked away. "To the mass-mind, scientists—whether they were called shamans, priests, seers, or nuclear-physicists—have always been objects of fear and suspicion. Perhaps the mass-mind, through the ages, has known instinctively that, sooner or later, the abnormally-developed intellect of precocious individuals and their esoteric cults of knowledge would lead man to his own destruction."

Greg took her hand. "Maybe the term 'insanity' applied to a mere straying from the intelligent norm of the mass would have been too strong a term—but when we gave atomic power to a world that wasn't ready for it, we became insane by definition. We rationalized; we said that it wasn't our fault if humanity was insane and misused our discoveries. But in reality, the mass has made incredible adjustments to our premature gadgets. But this adaptation, in its present final form, has meant the sacrifice of their will-to-live."

Dania Morris frowned. "I don't know," she said. "This is all so confusing; and I don't understand anything that's happening, either to the world or to you and me."

"You can only understand one thing," said Greg. "That this is the point at which man survives or ceases to survive. That's all."

"Yes, I've known that; everyone knows that. But that affair last night. I felt so strange. And you acted so peculiarly. And then today—I—I had a simple pattern of adjustment. Threshold after threshold in the Pleasure Palace. Lethe, and then sudden and painless death. But you've broken that pattern, and I wonder if I'm glad, or sorry."

"I wonder, too," George said.

"And I don't know what you're purpose is now," she said. "Whatever it is, you actually sound optimistic, afire; and that seems so odd. I haven't any argument against your contentions. As you say, in a social-legal sense, social leaders and scientists can be classified as—too abnormal perhaps. But you also imply hope, George. And—there can't be any hope now. We got off on the wrong road, and we stayed on it too long."

His hand tightened on hers. A vague and wonderful perfume came from her hair.

He said evenly. "This will really seem incredible to you I'm sure. But—if I can get back to the moon, as a free operative, in my former capacity, I can dictate the policies of the world!"

PORCELAIN transparency of her lean face might have grown more transparent; he didn't know. There was no tangible emotion in her eyes. She said nothing.

"Does that sound more insane to

you," he asked, "than if I went on carrying out my other destiny, finished the 'cosmobomb' with a chain reaction of incomputable extent? Does it suggest even a chance at survival, or does it seem just another last futile squirming as the curtain falls?"

"I don't know," she whispered.

"Frankly, neither do I know," he said. "I only say that it seems the one last chance, and that it might be worth a try. You were right; man did get off on the wrong road. Human evolution got off-balance. It should have begun with the most complex sciences first—psychology, biology, sociology. Instead we developed the simple abstract sciences of chemistry and physics and mathematics first, and advanced nowhere at all in the science of our own make-up. The result is a colossal imbalance that's pathological."

"I don't see what can be done now."

"We can stop, then force a regression in the fields of physical-chemical-mathematical sciences. We can force development of biological and psychological research until it is ready to deal with reality. The assumption that research would bring the sciences of psychology and biology down to a physical-chemical base has been pretty well exploded. It's a separate science, a closed 'system', and there's no reason why it can't be developed to a level equal to our present mastery of physics and chemistry."

"And you believe that you, one man, could command all the complexity of this world?"

"I might," he said. "On the moon, I would be invulnerable from any attack now capable of being thrown against me. I have a weapon more powerful than even I, its creator, can understand. I could become a dictator in the ultimate sense of the term. If necessary, I could force the destruction of all present scientific attainments in the fields of chemistry and physics. Force a return to a dark age if necessary. By force; by fear."

Her heavy lashes rose up and down as though someone behind were raising and lowering velvet drapes. And he saw it then. A growing spark kindling in the green pools of her eyes. "You might," she said. "But that isn't nearly so important, George, as the fact that you want to try."

His hands slid up her arms, gripped her shoulders. "My claim to sanity now—as contrasted to other scientists and politicians—is rather simple. I'm free from obsession with local divinities such as 'nation' or 'state.' If I can get back to the moon now, it won't be as an N'American, or as an enemy of Eurlania or Europa or of Asiana. It will be as a man of the family of man." And after a long half minute, Greg added.

"Or rather we. I want you to go with me, back to the Lunarian Base. Will you?"

Her voice was heavy. "It would be something important wouldn't it? Something worthwhile, that really mattered."

"Maybe it would," he answered. "Do you want to help me give it a try?"

"You at least have had the distinction of being abnormal," she whispered. "I've been a doll on a shelf; a mistress to a little man who was seldom there. It still doesn't seem real that I should be playing the role you've offered me."

"You can play it," he said. "And you'll play it well. The idea has every chance of failing, of being unfeasible. But will you help me try?"

And she said, "Yes."

THEY STARTED for the exit. Then she stopped him, "George, why haven't you given yourself up to the military? Why should you fear them?"

"I'm afraid of being given a psycho-check," he said. "They'll ask me why I wasn't at the Moonport this morning on schedule. I haven't a logical

reason. I can't tell them the truth; I can't say I was kidnapped, either. For even if I were—or could make them think so—that would only precipitate the atomic war that might go off any minute. As it is, the blowup might be stalled until we can get to the moon."

"But what else can you do?"

"We might steal a Moonship. That sounds ridiculous, and it probably is; maybe it's so ridiculous that we can get away with it."

"Wait, George! How do you know you *weren't* kidnapped?"

"What?"

"This Councilman. They say he was there as a mummy and that he left the hall with you— I saw you leave, George. Have you forgotten I was there? And you *did* leave with a mummy!"

He blinked. He remembered it vaguely, unreally.

"Did it ever occur to you," she asked, "that you might have been kidnapped by a foreign power, and put under some hypnotic influence. That all your present attitudes and resolves could have been put in your mind by deliberate intent. If that were true, then their idea has worked very well so far. You've refused to return to the Moon legally. If you should try to steal a Moonship and get blasted—then one of the other powers would soon be in a position to rule by the accepted method of annihilating everyone else even as—we plan to do."

"I never thought of it," he was looking at her strangely. People brushed past to take their various thresholds of dream and forgetfulness. He didn't notice. "You—you invited me down here," he said tightly.

She shook her head. "Yes. But I'm no spy, George. Do you believe that?"

Without hesitation, he said, "Yes."

"I don't remember anything about the mummy, Dania, except his eyes. I remember that once I got the peculiar impression that they weren't—human. They were a solid color, coal black, and glittering like polished beads—"

He heard her breath sharply. "Yes! Yes, the hydroponic peasant. I remember, too, now—the little man who blocked my entrance into my copter. His eyes were the same and—"

She explained further, that vague episode, the moment of staring into those strange eyes, and then the sudden obsession with Greg.

"You think it was the same, your peasant and the mummy?" he asked.

"I don't know, George. But even if it were, what would it mean to us? Would it change your plans?"

"Your ideas have already changed my plans. If this unknown hypnotist—or whoever he is—was responsible for you and I getting together, he has my gratitude. But from there on, I don't like being victimized by suggestion—especially when the motive is so intangible. If his suggestions were for us to steal a Moonship, and thereby get blasted off the map, then we won't steal a Moonship. We'll take a chance on getting back to the moon legally."

"Then what will be your reason for not appearing?"

He grinned almost boyishly. "The simplest possible reason, and one they might even fall for: a hangover."

●

They did, too. It had never occured to Greg just how important he was, nor to what an extent the N'American Military depended on him—until that ineffable flash of insight in which he saw himself and his world with such lucid and large-scale perspective. He had been serving in his cloistered role with no regard for the whole play. But now he realized that he was everything as far as N'American defense was concerned.

Greg identified Galatere as the man who had helped him home from the

masked ball; but he denied that he had been kidnapped in any way. Galatere was released, and N'America exuded warm apologies to Eurlania. As for Greg's hangover, they believed it—that Greg had wakened too late to report to Moonport as scheduled, and that he had gone to a Sensory Show for relaxation. The military didn't like it, but their distaste for his vagaries certainly wasn't apparent in their actions toward him.

His determination to marry Dania Morris and take her to the moon on his return was headline news, and the Military were in no position to argue about that, either.

TWENTY-FOUR hours later as Greg and Dania sat waiting for the audio to announce the readiness of the preparing Moonship's flight to Luna, Greg expressed the one confusing, somewhat uncomfortable mystery. "But it wasn't Galatere."

"No," she answered; "it wasn't Galatere."

"Then who was it and why? I'd recognize those eyes anywhere, anytime, and they weren't Galatere's eyes."

She didn't answer. She was looking to his left across the long shining floor toward the further entrance. Beyond the glass-domed walls could be seen the big rocket ramp, and the ship being readied for flight. But Dania wasn't looking at the scenery; the audio called them.

But Greg's eyes followed hers. A little man dressed as a hydroponic laborer was arguing with the guards at the gate. And even as they were seeming to be on the verge of ejecting the little man with physical force from the place, they reacted instead in a conversely peculiar fashion. They turned stiffly, began moving backward. They both turned at once away from the little man and proceeded, as though deliberately, to ignore him. The audio called again, summoning them to the ship.

And then the little man was coming toward them.

"That's him," she whispered tensely; "that's the man I was telling you about who stopped me from entering my copter that day. The man with the eyes like the mummy."

The little nutriculturist was walking faster and faster toward them across the marble mosaiced floor. He was leaning at a desperate kind of angle, and now he was close enough that they could see the first gleaming familiarity of his eyes.

"I'm afraid," said Dania. "I don't know why, but—"

So was Greg. He said so as he rose to his feet. "Let's get out of here; I have an idea that he can't influence us if we are surrounded by a lot of other people." Even as Greg spoke, they were walking rapidly away from their pursuer, heading for the exit into the walkway tunnel leading out to the ship.

Then the little man started running. Greg and Dania also began running. "This is silly," panted Greg, though somehow he felt that it wasn't silly at all; he could not for the life of him have said why it wasn't silly. To be running away from a drably-clothed nutriculturist.

Greg and Dania stopped at the end of the walkway tube. Looking back, they saw that their pursuer had stopped about a hundred feet away and was waving, then he yelled in a desperate high cry: "Wait! Don't do it, Greg!

Just listen to me for one minute before you *do* anything!"

"I'm afraid not," muttered Greg as they hurried on, and through the automatic doors. They closed, shut out the little man. They stood there a moment staring at the Moonship that was waiting for them with such utter lack of emotion.

"Whoever he was he was desperate," she said finally. "The desperation in his voice was—well it sounded closer to terror."

Greg nodded as they walked toward the ship. He wondered why the man had seemed desperate. If he were an agent of Eurlania, then why hadn't he killed Greg while he had the chance? Or if his idea was subtle impregnation of some posthypnotic action why the paradoxical display of so much efficiency contrasted with rank failure?"

Both of them soon forgot the strange little man with the powerful eyes completely.

DARREL'S body sagged behind his desk as he sat there looking at Anson. Anson, after stating his failure to stop Greg's and Dania's flight to the moon, had remained silent, slumping deeply in the thermostatic cushions.

Darrel's head turned. He looked out into the soft gentleness of the sky, so blue and unbelligerent-appearing, over Washington's mile-high buildings.

"We couldn't have anticipated the actions of these people as a whole or as individuals except within certain very confining limits. They have no science of psychology. A fool, turned loose in a chemical laboratory with no knowledge of the material he was using, would soon destroy himself. Coupled with that, our own psychology and sociology is scientific, predictable. That is, within our own culture it was so. Here it has become variable. Our philosophy is pragmatic—the sum and quest of our knowledge had always been: *"How does the outside world work in a given context? Approximately?* In our own culture, we did well with that search. It gave us as much power over our own environment as we were competent to handle. But this isn't *our* environment, Anson."

Anson gazed bitterly at his superior. "No, it isn't. We took their outward shape; their language; their colloquial expressions. Why couldn't we have predicted that subtly and inevitably we would be influenced by their philosophy?"

Darrel turned slowly. "Is our philosophy really enough, Anson? Maybe this ineffable mysticism of these homo sapiens is superior to our own approach?"

Anson muttered hopelessly. "Maybe. I won't argue now. You've been influenced, too? Whether your rationalization is applicable is beside the point. The point being—has our plan failed or not?"

But Darrel didn't seem so concerned now about the plan. He said. "These people are obsessed with finding some ultimate answer. Think of philosophy based on such a quest, Anson! Think of the exhilaration of being able to assume some ultimate truth! Of launching on such a search, and believing it! Anson, I wonder—is it really fair to ourselves to assume that we'll go on forever just cutting into the margins of the unknown? Just dabbling—feeling blind surfaces?"

Anson felt the little dust-motes of despair choking his mind. Darrel was unintegrated, his mind becoming more wrapped up in meaningless rationaliza-

tion of the growing fact that Plan-B, too, might be impossible. He appealed frantically to some hoped-for spark of objectivity remaining in Darrel.

"First we abandoned Plan-A; I still insist that we might have made it work. Then we adopted Plan-B, and already we play with the idea that it can't work, either. Greg's gone back to the moon. We cured his obsessions with nationalism, but he returned to the moon because an unexpected incident threw off our pattern so that we failed to provide conditioning measures for Greg's cleared mind. He has a reason for going back. Must we assume that it has any relationship to his former attitudes. No! We've got to give ourselves time under Plan-B. Plan-B is big, vast. It involves ten thousand years, mass-exodus, and therapy. It—"

Darrel interrupted. He didn't seem concerned with whether or not he was being rational, objective. And that was easily explained, too, thought Anson; he had lost insight.

Darrel said. "Plan-B might work, though it would demand the presence here of ninety percent of our population, practicing secretively. We'd need therapists even to guide the therapists. It's too variable; the chances of success are too slim to gamble with."

"There has to be a way under Plan-B," said Anson hoarsely; "we *must* make it work!"

Anson's voice cracked off. He stared at the growing whine from Darrel's VHF disk.

It was Weym's voice. It hardly sounded the same now. *"There will be immediate procedure in anticipation of Plan-C!* All fieldmen return to *Vordel* for transfer to Home Base. Therapeutic replacements now enroute will await in space the arrival of first Invasion Fleet under the command of Joyh-vek. Naturally, all former plans based on peaceful therapy abandoned because of limitless complexity. Return to *Vordel.* Return to—"

"No!" yelled Anson wildly as he somehow got on his feet and staggered toward Darrel. "He's mad, too; Weym's insane, too!"

Darrel shrugged. "No, I don't think so, Anson. Plan-C is the only way left. Destruction of earth and the moon and every living thing on them. That's the only way we can survive."

ANSON GRIPPED Darrel's hand. Beneath the synthetic plastiflesh, the real flesh of the Martian was trembling.

"Darrel!" Anson urged with frantic growing terror. Then he changed to the Martian's real name, because it seemed psychological sound. "Ankhor! Listen to me! You've been conditioned for this job. Conditioned to think, to evolve pragmatic ways to meet emergencies. You've also been conditioned to rationalize. You've used these people's schizoid escape fantasies, and so has Weym! Ankhor, we have one last chance to save these people and our own world, too. We can go to the *Vordel,* overpower Weym and send the true report of what's happening here back to Home Base.

"Given the facts about what's happened here, they can revise Plan-B, make it work. They're still objective. They—"

"And you," interrupted Darrel, "assume your own objectivity and sanity. What could be more insane under the critical circumstances than the proposal of mutiny?"

Anson's hands fumbled beneath his cloak. His hands twisted at the phial hidden there. His mind was a choked confused labyrinth of conflicting emotion. But he knew what he had to do; what little grim chance remained for the success of this expedition depended somehow on him.

He was an activist. Conditioned in

[*Turn to page* 112]

The ship was perfect, but was it a death-trap, too?

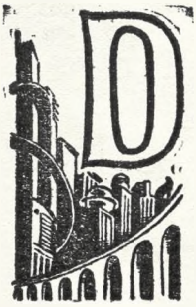
COMMON TIME

by James Blish

(illustrated by Tom Beecham)

Everything had been worked out in advance except the one factor that no one thought of — Garrad's subjective time-sense. And when a "day" to the ship is a "decade" to the passenger . . .

"...The days went slowly round and round, endless and uneventful as cycles in space. Time, and time-pieces! How many centuries did my hammock tell, as pendulum-like it swung to the ship's dull roll, and ticked the hours and ages."
— *Melville:* "Mardi"



DON'T MOVE.

It was the first thought that came into Garrard's mind when he awoke, and perhaps it saved his life. He lay where he was, s t r a p p e d against the padding, l i s t e n i n g to the round hum of the engines. That in itself was wrong; he should be unable to hear the overdrive at all.

He thought to himself: *Has it begun already?*

Otherwise everything seemed normal. The DFC-3 had crossed over into interstellar velocity, and he was still alive, and the ship was still functioning. The ship should at this moment be travelling at 22.4 times the speed of light—a neat 4,157,000 miles per second.

Somehow Garrard did not doubt that it was. On both previous tries, the ships had whiffed away toward Alpha Centauri at the proper moment when the overdrive should have cut in; and the split-second of residual image after they had vanished, subjected to spectroscopy, showed a Doppler shift which tallied with the acceleration predicted for that moment by Haertel.

The trouble was not that Brown and Cellini hadn't gotten away in good order. It was simply that neither of them had ever been heard from again.

Very slowly, he opened his eyes. His eyelids felt terrifically heavy. As far as he could judge from the pressure of-

the couch against his skin, the gravity was normal; nevertheless, moving his eyelids seemed almost an impossible job.

After long concentration, he got them fully open. The instrument-chassis was directly before him, extended over his diaphragm on its elbow-joint. Still without moving anything but his eyes—and those only with the utmost patience—he checked each of the meters. Velocity: 22.4 c. Operating-temperature: normal. Ship-temperature: 37° C. Air-pressure: 778 mm. Fuel: No. 1 tank full, No. 2 tank full, No. 3 tank full, No. 4 tank nine-tenths full. Gravity: 1 g. Calendar: stopped.

He looked at it closely, though his eyes seemed to focus very slowly, too. It was, of course, something more than a calendar—it was an all-purpose clock, designed to show him the passage of seconds, as well as of the ten months his trip was supposed to take to the double star. But there was no doubt about it: the second-hand was motionless.

That was the second abnormality. Garrard felt an impulse to get up and see if he could start the clock again. Perhaps the trouble had been temporary and safely in the past. Immediately there sounded in his head the injunction he had drilled into himself for a full month before the trip had begun—

Don't move!

Don't move until you know the situation as far as it can be known without moving. Whatever it was that had snatched Brown and Cellini irretrievably beyond human ken was potent, and totally beyond anticipation. They had both been excellent men, intelligent, resourceful, trained to the point of diminishing returns and not a micron beyond that point—the best men in the Project. Preparations for every knowable kind of trouble had been built into their ships, as they had been built into the DFC-3. Therefore, if there was something wrong, nevertheless, it would be something that might strike from some commonplace quarter—and strike only once.

He listened to the humming. It was even and placid, and not very loud, but it disturbed him deeply. The overdrive was supposed to be inaudible, and the tapes from the first unmanned test-vehicles had recorded no such hum. The noise did not appear to interfere with the overdrive's operation, or to indicate any failure in it. It was just an irrelevancy for which he could find no reason.

But the reason existed. Garrard did not intend to do so much as draw another breath until he found out what it was.

Incredibly, he realized for the first time that he had not in fact drawn one single breath since he had first come to. Though he felt not the slightest discomfort, the discovery called up so overwhelming a flash of panic that he very nearly sat bolt upright on the couch. Luckily—or so it seemed, after the panic had begun to ebb—the curious lethargy which had affected his eyelids appeared to involve his whole body, for the impulse was gone before he could summon the energy to answer it. And the panic, poignant though it had been for an instant, turned out to be wholly intellectual. In a moment, he was observing that his failure to breathe in no way discommoded him as far as he could tell—it was just there, waiting to be explained—

Or to kill him. But it hadn't, yet.

ENGINES humming; eyelids heavy; breathing absent; calendar stopped. The four facts added up to nothing. The temptation to move something—even if it were only a big toe—was strong, but Garrard fought it back. He had been awake only a short while—half an hour at most—and already had noticed four abnormalities. There were bound to be more, anomalies more subtle than these four, but

available to close examination before he had to move. Nor was there anything in particular that he had to do, aside from caring for his own wants: the Project, on the chance that Brown's and Cellini's failures to return had resulted from some tampering with the overdrive, had made everything in the DFC-3 subject only to the computer. In a very real sense, Garrard was just along for the ride. Only when the overdrive was off could he adjust—

Pock.

It was a soft, low-pitched noise, rather like a cork coming out of a wine-bottle. It seemed to have come just from the right of the control-chassis. He halted a sudden jerk of his head on the cushions toward it with a flat fiat of will. Slowly, he moved his eyes in that direction.

He could see nothing that might have caused the sound. The ship's temperature-dial showed no change, which ruled out a heat-noise from differential contraction or expansion—the only possible explanation he could bring to mind.

He closed his eyes—a process which turned out to be just as difficult as opening them had been—and tried to visualize what the calendar had looked like when he had first come out of anesthesia. After he got a clear and—he was almost sure—accurate picture, Garrard opened his eyes again.

The sound had been the calendar, advancing one second. It was now motionless again, apparently stopped.

He did not know how long it took the second-hand to make that jump, normally; the question had never come up. Certainly the jump, when it came at the end of each second, had been too fast for the eye to follow.

Belatedly, he realized what all this cogitation was costing him in terms of essential information. The calendar had moved. Above all and before anything else, he *must* know exactly how long it took it to move again—

He began to count, allowing an arbitrary five seconds lost. *One-and-a-six, one-and-a-seven, one-and-an-eight—*

Garrard had gotten only that far when he found himself plunged into Hell.

First, and utterly without reason, a sickening fear flooded swiftly through his veins, becoming more and more intense. His bowels began to knot, with infinite slowness. His whole body became a field of small, slow pulses—not so much shaking him as putting his limbs into contrary joggling motions, and making his skin ripple gently under his clothing. Against the hum another sound became audible, a nearly subsonic thunder which seemed to be inside his head. Still the fear mounted, and with it came the pain, and the tenesmus—a board-like stiffening of his muscles, particularly across his abdomen and his shoulders, but affecting his forearms almost as grievously. He felt himself beginning, very gradually, to double at the middle, a motion about which he could do precisely nothing—a terrifying kind of dynamic paralysis...

IT LASTED for hours. At the height of it, Garrard's mind, even his very personality, was washed out utterly; he was only a vessel of horror. When some few trickles of reason began to return over that burning desert of reasonless emotion, he found that he was sitting up on the cushions, and that with one arm he had thrust the control chassis back on its elbow so that it no longer jutted over his body. His clothing was wet with perspiration, which stubbornly refused to evaporate or to cool him. And his lungs ached a little, although he could still detect no breathing.

What under God had happened? Was it this that had killed Brown and Cellini? For it would kill Garrard, too—of that he was sure, if it happened often. It would kill him even if it hap-

pened only twice more, if the next two such things followed the first one closely. At the very best it would make a slobbering idiot of him; and though the computer might bring Garrard and the ship back to Earth, it would not be able to tell the Project about this tornado of senseless fear.

The calendar said that the eternity in hell had taken three seconds. As he looked at it in academic indignation, it said *Pock* and condescended to make the total seizure four seconds long. With grim determination, Garrard began to count again.

He took care to establish the counting as an absolutely even, automatic process which would not stop at the back of his mind no matter what other problem he tackled along with it, or what emotional typhoons should interrupt him. Really compulsive counting cannot be stopped by anything—not the transports of love nor the agonies of empires. Garrard knew the dangers in deliberately setting up such a mechanism in his mind, but he also knew how desperately he needed to time that clock-tick. He was beginning to understand what had happened to him—but he needed exact measurement before he could put that understanding to use.

Of course there had been plenty of speculation on the possible effect of the overdrive on the subjective time of the pilot, but none of it had come to much. At any speed below the velocity of light, subjective and objective time were exactly the same as far as the pilot was concerned. For an observer on Earth, time aboard the ship would appear to be vastly slowed at near-light speeds; but for the pilot himself there would be no apparent change.

Since flight beyond the speed of light was impossible—although for slightly differing reasons—by both the current theories of relativity, neither theory had offered any clue as to what would happen on board a trans-light ship. They would not allow that any such ship could even exist. The Haertel transformation, on which, in effect, the DFC-3 flew, was non-relativistic: it showed that the apparent elapsed time of a trans-light journey should be identical in ship-time, and in the time of observers at both ends of the trip.

But since ship and pilot were part of the same system, both covered by the same expression in Haertel's equation, it had never occurred to anyone that the pilot and the ship might keep different times. The notion was ridiculous.

One-and-a-sevenhundredone, one-and-a-sevenhundredtwo, one-and-a-sevenhundredthree, one-and-a-sevenhundredfour...

The ship was keeping ship-time, which was identical with observer-time. It would arrive at the Alpha Centauri system in ten months. But the pilot was keeping Garrard-time, and it was beginning to look as though he wasn't going to arrive at all.

It was impossible, but there it was. Something—almost certainly an unsuspected physiological side-effect of the overdrive field on human metabolism, an effect which naturally could not have been detected in the preliminary, robot-piloted tests of the overdrive—had speeded up Garrard's subjective apprehension of time, and had done a thorough job of it.

The second-hand began a slow, preliminary quivering as the calendar's innards began to apply power to it. *Seventy-hundred-forty-one, seventy-hundred-forty-two, seventy-hundred-forty-three...*

At the count of 7,058 the second-hand began the jump to the next graduation. It took it several apparent minutes to get across the tiny distance, and several more to come completely to rest. Later still, the sound came to him:

Pock.

In a fever of thought, but without any real physical agitation, his mind

began to manipulate the figures. Since it took him longer to count an individual number, the number became larger. The interval between the two calendar-ticks probably was closer to 7,200 seconds than to 7,058. Figuring backward brought him quickly to the equivalence he wanted:

One second in ship-time was two hours in Garrard-time.

Had he really been counting for what was, for him, two whole hours? There seemed to be no doubt about it. It looked like a long trip ahead.

Just how long it was going to be struck him with stunning force. Time had been slowed for him by a factor of 7200. He would get to Alpha Centauri in just 720,000 months.

Which was—

Six thousand years!

2

GARRARD sat motionless for a long time after that, the Nessus-shirt of warm sweat swathing him persistently, refusing even to cool. There was, after all, no hurry.

Six thousand years. There would be food and water and air for all that time, or for sixty or six hundred thousand years; the ship would synthesize his needs, as a matter of course, for as long as the fuel lasted, and the fuel bred itself. Even if Garrard ate a meal every three seconds of objective, or ship, time (which, he realized suddenly, he wouldn't be able to do, for it took the ship several seconds of objective-time to prepare and serve up a meal once it was ordered; he'd be lucky if he ate once a day, Garrard-time), there would be no reason to fear any shortage of supplies. That had been one of the earliest of the possibilities for disaster that the Project engineers had ruled out in the design of the DFC-3.

But nobody had thought to provide a mechanism which would indefinitely refurbish Garrard. After six thousand years, there would be nothing left of him but a faint film of dust on the DFC-3's dully-gleaming horizontal surfaces. His corpse might outlast him a while, since the ship itself was sterile—but eventually, he would be consumed by the bacteria which he carried in his own digestive tract. He needed that bacteria to synthesize part of his B-vitamin needs while he lived, but it would consume him without compunction once he had ceased to be as complicated and delicately balanced a thing as a pilot—or as any other kind of life.

Garrard was, in short, to die before the DFC-3 had gotten fairly away from Sol; and when, after 12,000 apparent-years, the DFC-3 returned to Earth, not even his mummy would be still aboard.

The chill that went through him at that seemed almost unrelated to the way he thought he felt about the discovery: it lasted an enormously long time, and insofar as he could characterize it at all, it seemed to be a chill of urgency and excitement—not at all the kind of chill he should be feeling at a virtual death-sentence. Luckily it was not as intolerably violent as the last such emotional convulsion; and when it was over, two clock-ticks later, it left behind a residuum of doubt.

Suppose that this effect of time-stretching was only mental? The rest of his bodily-processes might still be keeping ship-time; Garrard had no immediate reason to believe otherwise. If so, he would be able to move about only on ship-time, too; it would take many apparent months to complete the simplest task.

But he would live, if that were the case. His mind would arrive at Alpha Centauri six thousand years older, and

perhaps madder, than his body, but he would live.

If, on the other hand, his bodily movements were going to be as fast as his mental processes, he would have to be enormously careful. He would have to move slowly and exert as little force as possible. The normal human hand movement, in such a task as lifting a pencil, took the pencil from a state of rest to another state of rest by imparting to it an acceleration of about two feet per second per second —and, of course, decelerated it by the same amount. If Garrard were to attempt to impart to a two-pound weight, which was keeping ship-time, an acceleration of 14,440 ft/sec2 in his time, he'd have to exert a force of 900 pounds on it.

The point was not that it couldn't be done—but that it would take as much effort as pushing a stalled jeep. He'd never be able to lift that pencil with his forearm muscles alone; he'd have to put his back into the task.

And the human body wasn't engineered to maintain stresses of that magnitude indefinitely. Not even the most powerful professional weightlifter is forced to show his prowess throughout every minute of every day.

Pock.

That was the calendar again; another second had gone by. Or another two hours. It had certainly seemed longer than a second, but less than two hours, too. Evidently subjective-time was an intensively recomplicated measure. Even in this world of micro-time—in which Garrard's mind, at least, seemed to be operating—he could make the lapses between calendar-ticks seem a little shorter by becoming actively interested in some problem or other. That would help, during the waking hours, but it would help only if the rest of his body were *not* keeping the same time as his mind. If it were not, then he would lead an incredibly active, but perhaps not intolerable mental life during the many centuries of his awake-time, and would be mercifully asleep for nearly as long.

BOTH PROBLEMS—that of how much force he could exert with his body, and how long he could hope to be asleep in his mind—emerged simultaneously into the forefront of his consciousness while he still sat inertly on the hammock, their terms still much muddled together. After the single tick of the calendar, the ship—or the part of it that Garrard could see from here—settled back into complete rigidity. The sound of the engines, too, did not seem to vary in frequency or amplitude, at least as far as his ears could tell. He was still not breathing. Nothing moved, nothing changed.

It was the fact that he could still detect no motion of his diaphragm or his rib-cage that decided him at last. His body had to be keeping ship-time, otherwise he would have blacked out from oxygen-starvation long before now. That assumption explained, too, those two incredibly-prolonged, seemingly-sourceless saturnalias of emotion through which he had suffered: they had been nothing more nor less than the response of his endocrine glands to the purely intellectual reactions he had experienced earlier. He had discovered that he was not breathing, had felt a flash of panic and had tried to sit up. Long after his mind had forgotten those two impulses, they had inched their way from his brain down his nerves to the glands and muscles involved, and actual, *physical* panic had supervened. When that was over, he actually *was* sitting up, though the flood of adrenalin had prevented his noticing the motion as he had made it. The later chill—less violent, and apparently associated with the discovery that he might die long before the trip was completed—actually had been his body's response to a much earlier mental command—the abstract fever

of interest he had felt while computing the time-differential had been responsible for it.

Obviously, he was going to have to be very careful with apparently cold and intellectual impulses of any kind —or he would pay for them later with a prolonged and agonizing glandular reaction. Nevertheless, the discovery gave him considerable satisfaction, and Garrard allowed it free play; it certainly could not hurt him to feel pleased for a few hours, and the glandular pleasure might even prove helpful if it caught him at a moment of mental depression. Six thousand years, after all, provided a considerable number of opportunities for feeling down in the mouth; so it would be best to encourage all pleasure-moments, and let the after-reaction last as long as it might. It would be the instants of panic, of fear, of gloom which he would have to regulate sternly the moment they came into his mind; it would be those which would otherwise plunge him into four, five, six, perhaps even ten Garrard-hours of emotional inferno.

Pock.

THERE NOW, that was very good: there had been two Garrard-hours which he had passed with virtually no difficulty of any kind, and without being especially conscious of their passage. If he could really settle down and become used to this kind of scheduling, the trip might not be as bad as he had at first feared. Sleep would take immense bites out of it; and during the waking periods he could put in one hell of a lot of creative thinking. During a single day of ship time, Garrard could get in more thinking than any philosopher of Earth could have managed during an entire lifetime. Garrard could, if he disciplined himself sufficiently, devote his mind for a century to running down the consequences of a single thought, down to the last detail, and still have millenia left to go on to the next thought. What panoplies of pure reason could he not have assembled by the time 6,000 years had gone by? With sufficient concentration, he might come up with the solution to the Problem of Evil between breakfast and dinner of a single ship's day, and in a ship's month might put his finger on the First Cause!

Pock.

Not that Garrard was sanguine enough to expect that he would remain logical or even sane throughout the trip. The vista was still grim, in much of its detail. But the opportunities, too, were there. He felt a momentary regret that it hadn't been Haertel, rather than himself, who had been given such an opportunity—

Pock.

—for the old man could certainly have made better use of it than Garrard could. The situation demanded someone trained in the highest rigors of mathematics to be put to the best conceivable use. Still and all Garrard began to feel—

Pock.

—that he would give a good account of himself, and it tickled him to realize that (as long as he held onto his essential sanity) he would return—

Pock.

—to Earth after ten Earth months with knowledge centuries advanced beyond anything—

Pock.

—that Haertel knew, or that anyone could know—

Pock.

—who had to work within a normal lifetime. *Pck.* The whole prospect tickled him. *Pck.* Even the clock-tick seemed more cheerful. *Pck.* He felt fairly safe now *Pck* in disregarding his drilled-in command *Pck* against moving *Pck,* since in any *Pck* event he *Pck* had already *Pck* moved *Pck* without *Pck* being *Pck* harmed *Pck Pck Pck Pck Pck pckpckpckpckpckpckpck...*

He yawned, stretched, and got up.

It wouldn't do to be too pleased, after all. There were certainly many problems that still needed coping with, such as how to keep the impulse toward getting a ship-time task performed going, while his higher centers were following the ramifications of some purely philosophical point. And besides...

And besides, he had just moved.

More than that: he had just performed a complicated maneuver with his body *in normal time!*

Before Garrard looked at the calendar itself, the message it had been ticking away at him had penetrated. While he had been enjoying the protracted, glandular backwash of his earlier feeling of satisfaction, he had failed to notice, at least consciously, that the calendar was accelerating.

Goodbye, vast ethical systems which would dwarf the Greeks. Goodbye, calculi aeons advanced beyond the spinor-calculus of Dirac. Goodbye, cosmologies by Garrard which would allot the Almighty a job as third-assistant-waterboy in an n-dimensional backfield.

Goodbye, also, to a project he had once tried to undertake in college—to describe and count the positions of love, of which, according to under-the-counter myth, there were supposed to be at least 48. Garrard had never been able to carry his tally beyond 20, and he had just lost what was probably his last opportunity to try again.

The micro-time in which he had been living had worn off, only a few objective-minutes after the ship had gone into overdrive and he had come out of the anesthetic. The long intellectual agony, with its glandular counterpoint, had come to nothing. Garrard was now keeping ship-time.

GARRARD sat back down on the hammock, uncertain whether to be bitter or relieved. Neither emotion satisfied him in the end; he simply felt unsatisfied. Micro-time had been bad enough while it lasted; but now it was gone, and everything seemed normal. How could so transient a thing have killed Brown and Cellini? They were stable men, more stable, by his own private estimation, than Garrard himself. Yet he had come through it. Was there more to it than this?

And if there was—what, conceivably, could it be?

There was no answer. At his elbow, on the control-chassis which he had thrust aside during that first moment of infinitely-protracted panic, the calendar continued to tick. The engine-noise was gone. His breath came and went in natural rhythm. He felt light and strong. The ship was quiet, calm, unchanging.

The calendar ticked, faster and faster. It reached and passed the first hour, ship-time, of flight in overdrive.

Pock.

Garrard looked up in surprise. The familiar noise, this time, had been the hour-hand jumping one unit. The minute-hand was already sweeping past the past half-hour. The second-hand was whirling like a propellor—and while he watched it, it speeded up to complete invisiblity—

Pock.

Another hour. The half-hour already passed. *Pock.* Another hour. *Pock.* Another. *Pock. Pock. Pock, Pock, Pock, Pock, pck-pck-pck-pck-pckpckpckpck...*

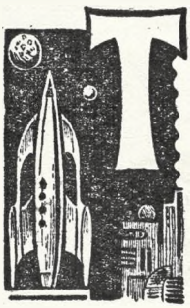
The hands of the calendar swirled toward invisibility as time ran away with Garrard. Yet the ship did not change. It stayed there, rigid, inviolate, invulnerable. When the date-tumblers reached a speed at which Garrard could no longer read them, he discovered that once more he could not move—and that, although his whole body seemed to be aflutter like that of a humming-bird, nothing coherent was coming to him through his senses. The room was dimming, becoming redder; or no, it was...

But he never saw the end of the

process, never was allowed to look from the pinnacle of macro-time toward which the Haertel overdrive was taking him.

Pseudo-death took him first.

3



THAT GARRARD did not die completely, and within a comparatively short time after the DFC-3 had gone into overdrive, was due to the purest of accidents; but Garrard did not know that. In fact, he knew nothing at all for an indefinite period, sitting rigid and staring, his metabolism slowed down to next to nothing, his mind almost utterly inactive. From time to time, a single wave of low-level metabolic activity passed through him—what an electrician might have termed a "maintenance turnover"—in response to the urgings of some occult survival-urge; but these were of so basic a nature as to reach his consciousness not at all. This was the pseudo-death.

Then, it was as if a single dim light had been turned on in the midst of an enormous cavern. Garrard was—no, not conscious again; but at least he was once more alive, and in the deep levels of his mind that fact registered. He began to breathe normally. An observer might have judged him to be asleep, as in fact he was. The sleep was very deep, but at least it was no longer the pseudo-death.

When the observer actually arrived, however, Garrard woke. He could make very little sense out of what he saw or felt even now; but one fact was clear: the overdrive was off—and with it the crazy alterations in time-rates—and there was strong light coming through one of the ports. The first leg of the trip was over. It had been these two changes in his environment which had restored him to life.

The thing (or things) which had restored him to consciousness, however, was—it was what? It made no sense. It was a construction, a rather fragile one, which completely surrounded his hammock. No, it wasn't a construction, but evidently something alive—a living being, organized horizontally, that had arranged itself in a circle about him. No, it was a number of beings. Or a combination of all of these things.

How it had gotten into the ship was a mystery, but there it was. Or there they were.

"How do you hear?" the creature said abruptly. Its voice, or their voices, came at equal volume from every point in the circle, but not from any particular point in it. Garrard could think of no reason why that should be unusual.

"I—" he said. "Or we—we hear with our ears. Here."

His answer, with its unintentionally-long chain of open vowel-sounds, rang ridiculously. He wondered why he was speaking such an odd language.

"We-they wooed to pitch you-yours thiswise," the creature said. With a thump, a book from the DFC-3's ample library fell to the deck beside the hammock. "We wooed there and there and there for a many. You are the being-Garrard. We-they are the clinesterton beademung, with all of love."

"With all of love," Garrard echoed. The beademung's use of the language they both were speaking was odd; but again Garrard could find no logical reason why the beademung's usage should be considered wrong.

"Are—are you-they from Alpha Centauri?" he said hesitantly.

"Yes, we hear the twin radioceles, that show there beyond the gift-orifices. We-they pitched that the being-Garrard with most adoration these twins and had mind to them, soft and loud alike. How do you hear?"

This time the being-Garrard understood the question. "I hear Earth," he said. "But that is very soft, and does not show."

"Yes," said the beademung. "It is a harmony, not a first, as ours. The All-Devouring listens to lovers there, not on the radioceles. Let me-mine pitch you-yours so to have mind of the rodalent beademung and other brothers and lovers, along the channel which is fragrant to the being-Garrard."

Garrard found that he understood the speech without difficulty. The thought occurred to him that to understand a language on its own terms —without having to put it back into English in one's own mind—is an ability that is won only with difficulty and long practice. Yet, instantly his mind said, "But it *is* English," which of course it was. The offer the clinesterton beademung had just made was enormously hearted, and he in turn was much minded and of love, to his own delighting as well as to the beademungen; that almost went without saying.

THERE WERE many matings of ships after that, and the being-Garrard pitched the harmonies of the beademungen, leaving his ship with the many gift orifices in harmonic for the All-Devouring to love, while the beademungen made show of they-theirs.

He tried, also, to tell how he was out of love with the overdrive, which wooed only spaces and times, and made featurelings. The rodalent beademung wooed the overdrive, but it did not pitch he-them.

Then the being-Garrard knew that all the time was devoured, and he must hear Earth again.

"I pitch you-them to fullest love," he told the beademungen. "I shall adore the radioceles of Alpha and Proxima Centauri, 'on Earth as it is in Heaven.' Now the overdrive my-other must woo and win me, and make me adore a featureling much like silence."

"But you will be pitched again," the clinesterton beademung said. "After you have adored Earth. You are much loved by Time, the All-Devouring. We-they shall wait for this othering."

Privately Garrard did not faith as much, but he said, "Yes, we-they will make a new wooing of the beademungen at some other radiant. With all of love."

On this the beademungen made and pitched adorations, and in the midst the overdrive cut in. The ship with the many gift orifices and the being-Garrard him-other saw the twin radioceles sundered away.

Then, once more, came the pseudo-death.

4

WHEN THE small candle lit in the endless cavern of Garrard's pseudo-dead mind, the DFC-3 was well inside the orbit of Uranus. Since the sun was still very small and distant, it made no spectacular display through the nearby port, and nothing called him from the post-death sleep for nearly two days.

The computers waited patiently for him. They were no longer immune to his control; he could now tool the ship back to Earth himself if he so desired. But the computers were also designed to take into account the fact that he might be truly dead by the time the DFC-3 got back. After giving him a solid week, during which time he did nothing but sleep, they took over again. Radio signals began to go out, tuned to a special channel.

An hour later, a very weak signal

came back. It was only a directional signal, and it made no sound inside the DFC-3—but it was sufficient to put the big ship in motion again.

It was that which woke Garrard. His conscious mind was still glazed over with the icy spume of the pseudo-death; and as far as he could see the interior of the cabin had not changed one whit, except for the book on the deck—

The book. The clinesterton beademung had dropped it there. But what under God was a clinesterton beademung? And what was he, Garrard, crying about? It didn't make sense. He remembered dimly some kind of experience out there by the Centauri twins—

—the twin radioceles—

There was another one of those words. It seemed to have Greek roots, but he knew no Greek—and besides, why would Centaurians speak Greek?

He leaned forward and actuated the switch which would roll the shutter off the front port, actually a telescope with a translucent viewing-screen. It showed a few stars, and a faint nimbus off on one edge which might be the Sun. At about one o'clock on the screen, was a planet about the size of a pea which had tiny projections, like tea-cup handles, on each side. The DFC-3 hadn't passed Saturn on its way out; at that time it had been on the other side of the sun from the route the starship had had to follow. But the planet was certainly difficult to mistake.

Garrard was on his way home—and he was still alive and sane. Or was he still sane? These fantasies about Centaurians—which still seemed to have such a profound emotional effect upon him—did not argue very well for the stability of his mind.

But they were fading rapidly. When he discovered, cluching at the handiest fragments of the "memories," that the plural of *beademung* was *beademungen,* he stopped taking the problem seriously. Obviously a race of Centaurians who spoke Greek wouldn't also be forming weak German plurals. The whole business had obviously been thrown up by his unconscious.

But what *had* he found by the Centaurus stars?

There was no answer to that question but that incomprehensible garble about love, the All-Devouring, and beademungen. Possibly he had never seen the Centaurus stars at all, but had been lying here, cold as a mackerel, for the entire twenty months.

Or had it been 12,000 years? After the tricks the overdrive had played with time, there was no way to tell what the objective-date actually was. Frantically Garrard put the telescope into action. Where was the Earth? After 12,000 years—

The Earth was there. Which, he realized swiftly, proved nothing. The Earth had lasted for many millions of years; 12,000 years was nothing to a planet. The Moon was there, too; both were plainly visible, on the far side of the Sun—but not too far to pick them out clearly, with the telescope at highest power. Garrard could even see a clear sun-highlight on the Atlantic Ocean, not far east of Greenland; evidently the computers were bringing the DFC-3 in on the Earth from about 23° north of the plane of the ecliptic.

The Moon, too, had not changed. He could even see on its face the huge splash of white, mimicking the sun-highlight on Earth's ocean, which was the magnesium-hydroxide landing-beacon, which had been dusted over the Mare Vaporum in the earliest days of spaceflight, with a dark spot on its southern edge which could only be the crater Monilius.

But that again proved nothing. The Moon never changed. A film of dust laid down by modern man on its face would last for millenia—what, after all, existed on the Moon to blow it

away? The Mare Vaporum beacon covered more than 4000 square miles; age would not dim it, nor could man himself undo it—either accidentally, or on purpose—in anything under a century. When you dust an area that large on a world without atmosphere, it stays dusted.

He checked the stars against his charts. They hadn't moved; why should they have, in only 12,000 years? The pointer-stars in the Dipper still pointed to Polaris. Draco, like a fantastic bit of tape, wound between the two Bears, and Cepheus and Cassiopeia, as it always had done. These constellations told him only that it was spring in the northern hemisphere of Earth.

But spring of what year?

THEN, SUDDENLY, it occurred to Garrard that he had a method of finding the answer. The Moon causes tides in the Earth, and action and reaction are always equal and opposite. The Moon cannot move things on Earth without itself being affected —and that effect shows up in the moon's angular momentum. The Moon's distance from the Earth increases steadily by 0.6 inches every year. At the end of 12,000 years, it should be 600 feet farther away from the Earth than it had been when Garrard left it.

Was it possible to measure? Garrard doubted it, but he got out his ephemeris and his dividers anyhow, and took pictures. While he worked, the Earth grew nearer. By the time he had finished his first calculation—which was indecisive, because it allowed a margin for error greater than the distances he was trying to check—Earth and Moon were close enough in the telescope to permit much more accurate measurements.

Which were, he realized wryly, quite unnecessary. The computer had brought the DFC-3 back, not to an observed sun or planet, but simply to a calculated point. That Earth and Moon would not be near that point when the DFC-3 returned was not an assumption that the computer could make. That the Earth was visible from here was already good and sufficient proof that no more time had elapsed than had been calculated for from the beginning.

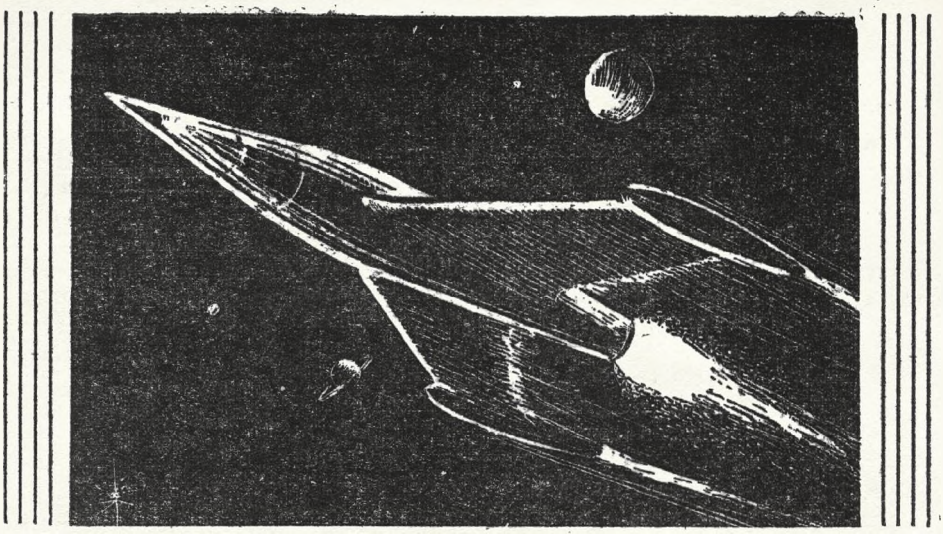
This was hardly new to Garrard; it had simply been retired to the back of his mind. Actually he had been doing all this figuring for one reason, and one reason only: because deep in his brain, set to work by himself, there was a mechanism that demanded counting. Long ago, while he was still trying to time the ship's calendar, he had initiated compulsive counting—and it appeared that he had been counting ever since. That had been one of the known dangers of deliberately starting such a mental mechanism; and now it was bearing fruit in these perfectly-useless astronimical exercises.

The insight was healing. He finished the figures roughly, and that unheard moron deep inside his brain stopped counting at last. It had been pawing its abacus for twenty months now, and Garrard imagined that it was as glad to be retired as he was to feel it go.

His radio squawked, and said anxiously, "DFC-3, DFC-3. Garrard, do you hear me? Are you still alive? Everybody's going wild down here. Garrard, if you hear me, call us!"

It was Haertel's voice. Garrard closed the dividers so convulsively that one of the points nipped into the heel of his hand. "Haertel, I'm here. DFC-3 to the Project. This is Garrard." And then, without knowing quite why, he added: "With all of love."

HAERTEL, after all the hoopla was over, was more than interested in the time-effects. "It certainly en-



larges the manifold in which I was working," he said. "But I think we can account for it in the transformation. Perhaps even factor it out, which would eliminate it as far as the pilot is concerned. We'll see, anyhow."

Garrard swirled his highball reflectively. In Haertel's cramped old office, in the Project's administration-shack, he felt both strange and as old, as compressed, constricted. He said, "I don't think I'd do that, Adolph. I think it saved my life."

"How?"

"I told you that I seemed to die after a while. Since I got home, I've been reading; and I've discovered that the psychologists take far less stock in the individuality of the human psyche than you and I do. You and I are physical scientists, so we think about the world as being all outside our skins—something which is to be observed, but which doesn't alter the essential *I*. But evidently, that old solipsistic position isn't quite true. Our very personalities, really, depend in large part upon *all* the things in our environment, large and small, that exist outside our skins. If by some means you could cut a human being off from every sense-impression that comes to him from outside, he would cease to exist as a personality within two or three minutes. Probably he would die."

"Unquote: Harry Stack Sullivan," Haertel said, dryly. "So?"

"So," Garrard said, "think of what a monotonous environment the inside dinary interplanetary flight, in such an environment, even the most hardened spaceman may go off his rocker now and then. You know the typical spaceman's psychosis as well as I do, I suppose. The man's personality goes rigid, just like his surroundings. Usually he recovers as soon as he makes port, and makes contact with a more-or-less normal world again.

"But in the DFC-3, I was cut off from the world around me much more severely. I couldn't look outside the ports—I was in overdrive, and there was nothing to see. I couldn't communicate with home, because I was going faster than light. And then I found I couldn't move, too, for an enormous long while; and that even the instruments that are in constant change for the usual spaceman wouldn't be in motion for me. Even those were fixed.

"After the time-rate began to pick up, I found myself in an even more impossible box. The instruments

moved, all right, but then they moved too *fast* for me to read them. The whole situation was now utterly rigid—and, in effect, I died. I froze as solid as the ship around me, and stayed that way as long as the overdrive was on."

"By that showing," Haertel said dryly, "the time-effects were hardly your friends."

"But they were, Adolph. Look. Your engines act on subjective-time; they keep it varying along continuous curves—from far-too-slow to far-too-fast—and, I suppose, back down again. Now, this is a *situation of continuous change.* It wasn't marked enough, in the long run, to keep me out of pseudo-death; but it was sufficient to protect me from being obliterated altogether, which I think is what happened to Brown and Cellini. Those men knew that they could shut down the overdrive if they could just get to it, and they killed themselves trying. But I knew that I just had to sit and take it—and, by my great good luck, your sine-curve time-variation made it possible for me to survive."

"Ah, ah," Haertel said. "A point worth considering—though I doubt that it will make interstellar travel very popular!"

He dropped back into silence, his thin mouth pursed. Garrard took a grateful pull at his drink. At last Haertel said: "Why are you in trouble over these Centaurians? It seems to me that you have done a good job. It was nothing that you were a hero—any fool can be brave—but I see also that you *thought,* where Brown and Cellini evidently only reacted. Is there some secret about what you found when you reached those two stars?"

GARRARD said, "Yes, there is. But I've already told you what it is. When I came out of the pseudo-death, I was just a sort of plastic palimpsest upon which anybody could have made a mark. My own environment, my ordinary Earth environment, was a hell of a long way off. My present surroundings were nearly as rigid as they had ever been. When I met the Centaurians—if I did, and I'm not at all sure of that—*they* became the most important thing in my world, and my personality changed to accommodate and understand them. That was a change about which I couldn't do a thing.

"Possibly I did understand them. But the man who understood them wasn't the same man you're talking to now, Adolph. Now that I'm back on Earth, I don't understand that man. He even spoke English in a way that's gibberish to me. If I can't understand myself during that period—and I can't; I don't even believe that that man was the Garrard I know—what hope have I of telling you or the Project about the Centaurians? They found me in a controlled environment, and they altered me by entering it. Now that they're gone, nothing comes through; I don't even understand why I think they spoke English!"

"Did they have a name for themselves?"

"Sure," Garrard said. "They were the beademungen."

"What did they look like?"

"I never saw them."

Haertel leaned forward. "Then—"

"I heard them. I think." Garrard shrugged, and tasted his Scotch again. He was home, and on the whole he was pleased.

But in his malleable mind he heard someone say, *On Earth, as it is in Heaven;* and then, in another voice, which might also have been his own (why had he thought "him-other"?), *It is later than you think.*

"Adolph," he said, "is this all there is to it? Or are we going to go on with it from here? How long will it take to make a better starship, a DFC-4?"

"Many years," Haertel said, smiling kindly. "Don't be anxious, Garrard. You've come back, which is more than

the others managed to do, and nobody will ask you to go out again. I really think that it's hardly likely that we'll get another ship built during your lifetime; and even if we do, we'll be slow to launch it. We really have very little information about what kind of a playground you found out there."

"I'll go," Garrard said. "I'm not afraid to go back—I'd like to go. Now that I know how the DFC-3 behaves, I could take it out again, bring you back proper maps, tapes, photos."

"Do you really think," Haertel said, his face suddenly serious, "that we could let the DFC-3 go out again? Garrard, we're going to take that ship apart practically molecule by molecule; that's preliminary to the building of any DFC-4. And no more can we let you go. I don't mean to be cruel, but has it occurred to you that this desire to go back may be the result of some kind of post-hypnotic suggestion? If so, the more badly you want to go back, the more dangerous to us all you may be. We are going to have to examine you just as thoroughly as we do the ship. If these beademungen wanted you to come back, they must have had a reason—and we have to know that reason."

Garrard nodded, but he knew that Haertel could see the slight movement of his eyebrows and the wrinkles forming in his forehead, the contractions of the small muscles which stop the flow of tears only to make grief patent on the rest of the face.

"In short," he said, *"don't move."*

Haertel looked politely puzzled. Garrard, however, could say nothing more. He had returned to humanity's common-time, and would never leave it again.

Not even, for all his dimly-remembered promise, with all there was left in him of love.

★

The mysterious patient appeared after the crash . . .

He had to be ignorant, for to know anything significant would be deadly; but his lack of information was deadlier still!

CHARACTERISTICS: UNUSUAL

Novelet by
Randall Garrett

(illustrated by Tom Beecham)

THE LONG, slender golden spaceship floated majestically up through the air, gathering speed as it reached the upper limits of the atmosphere. It stopped, swivelled in space, and pointed itself toward the general direction of the constellation of Saggitarius, the Archer.

Inside, John Gorman watched his second-cousin-eighteen-times-removed, Richard, peel the remains of a hairless plastic mask from his head and a pair of lifelike, six-fingered gloves from his five-fingered hands.

"Where to?" he asked.

"Bardonis IV, and shove her up to maximum," said Richard. "And fix me a drink."

John swirled some water into the glasses on the table, added an equal amount of brandy-like liquor from a bottle, and handed one of the results to Richard.

At the same time, John's mind reached out, took control of the ship; set the alarms; cut in the engines; aimed the ship more precisely, and eased in the spacetime clutch.

It was as natural as walking, and required even less concentration. Outside, the stars began to move.

Richard dumped the remains of his disguise into a locker, settled himself into an easy chair, and tasted the drink appreciatively. "I suppose," he observed, "you would like to know what this is all about."

John put a startled look on his face. "Who? Me? Oh, *no!* The Space Training Command on Ferridel took me out of my tank two years ago, taught me as little as it could, and told me I was probably the rawest, most ignorant Gorr-man that had ever reached the age of two. Then they give me a ship, tell me to do what you say, and to ask no questions. Then, we come here, to this planet Earth, pick up a passenger —and without so much as saying 'hello' to him, we put him into a coma and dunk him into an incubator tank.

"Do I want to know anything, in my state of happy ignorance? Perish forbid!"

Richard sipped his drink. "Oh. Well." He looked out the forward plate at the spreading stars. "Aren't the stars pretty?"

John groaned. "All right, ancient and honorable cousin, come on—come on!"

"But you just said—"

"Never mind what I just said! Out with it!"

Richard settled himself a little deeper into the chair. "Very well. In the first place, you *had* to be ignorant. You see, seventy-six years ago—"

"What do you mean I *kad* to be ignorant?" John interrupted.

"Well, you are a Type Alpha robot; I'm Type Beta. *I* can't control a spaceship, because my brain isn't designed for it; and I had to have you along to run this ship.

"Anyway, as I was saying, seventy-six years ago—"

"But just a minute! What does my being a Type Alpha have to do with it?"

Richard closed his eyes and sighed. "Because you are telepathic. We couldn't take the chance of your spreading information all over the Galaxy, to be picked up by the wrong people. Every other Type Alpha has strict orders to stay out of range of this entire sector, for a radius of seventeen light-years. That will take care of any normal thought-processes, and absolutely no concentration beams can be sent directly through here; they all have to be relayed through Pilden VII or Thanidor.

"Of course, we know now that our precautions were wasted, but we couldn't know that before just a few minutes ago. There wasn't any way *I* could have found it out in my four years of investigation."

John Gorman frowned. "But how did you get there to investigate. I hope you didn't train a couple of other ignoramuses."

Richard shook his head. "Nope. I used one of the old automatic jobs that the humans used to use twenty-five hundred years ago. Top speed: one thousand lights—if you strain 'em. Any more questions?"

"Mmmm'h—no, guess not."

"Good. As I was trying to say, seventy-six years ago—and I hope I can get this said before it becomes seventy-seven—seventy-six years ago, a cousin by the name of Samuel left Ferridel III with a special cargo bound for the labs on Bardonis. He was about two thousand light-years out when—"

SAMUEL GORMAN sat quietly in the big easy chair that commanded a view of the forward plate, and watched the stars float by. It could not properly be said that he was in

the control-room, for the ship had no control-room, as such; any room he chose to be in was the control-room.

A part of Gorman's mind held a tight grip on every ultra-relay in the ship. Every one of the millions of hypersensitive little devices was as firmly linked to his brain as were the nerves in his fingers or toes, although not as tangibly. And, through them, the ship was as much a part of him as a finger or toe.

Sam Gorman was doing a job no human could ever have done; for it is as impossible for a human being to control a ship at ultravelocities as it is for him to drive an automobile through a schoolyard full of children at ninety miles an hour.

It can be done—but it's usually fatal to someone.

Far ahead of the ship lay the vast star-clouds of Saggitarius; seventeen hours of flight-time to the rear lay Ferridel III. At the time, the ship was passing through the sector which had been occupied successively by the Solar Federation and the Grand Empire of Lilaar—both of which had been only memories for a thousand years and more.

The curves and twists and loops in ultra-spacetime are many and varied. They are like the coils of some g r e a t hyperdimensional, many-tentacled squid, sluggishly squirming in and out of itself. Occasionally, here and there in the metagalactic universe, a litte pocket of no-space occurs. It may be difficult to see how it is possible to describe a no-space as "little", because a lack of space can hardly be said to have a size. Nevertheless, a mathematical analysis will show that it can be measured by the amount of space it does *not* occupy. Normally, the "volume" is not more than ten to the minus twenty-one cubic centimeters, and its duration is usually measured in fractions of a microsecond.

But not always. The one with which Sam Gorman suddenly became concerned was a full three hundredths of a centimeter in diameter and its duration proportionately shorter—some ten to the minus nine microseconds—during which time the ship moved about thirty centimeters. The no-space came into being near the rear of the ship, and in its short existence cut through eighteen ultrarelays as the ship moved.

To Sam Gorman, it was as though someone had stuck a pin into him. It didn't hurt particularly, but it startled him; and at that velocity, the interruption was fatal. The ship leaped, jerked, and bounced; and, although Sam's brain was capable of making decisions and acting on them in almost no time at all, his body was comparatively sluggish and inert. He tried to regain control of the ship, tried to keep himself from hitting the forward plate—to no avail.

As Samuel Gorman's skull was smashed against the image of Sol on the plate by the terrible acceleration, he died, and the ship died with him. The engines went out, and the ship—with very little real velocity in relation to the star ahead—stopped "dead" in space. Slowly, it began to fall toward the sun.

Sam's last flickering thought was: *The cargo! What about the cargo?* Then, that thought, too, was gone.

Sixty-nine years later, the ship hit Earth and exploded, scattering Sam's bones and the cargo in a blast of flame.

Unfortunately, it also flattened everything for some forty-five or fifty kilometers around, including the little village of Kreyne, in what had once been called the State of Ohio.

CAPTAIN BARR JORVIN settled the aircar softly on the lawn before Dr. Groom's house, stepped out and rapped on the door. While he waited for an answer, he straightened his green uniform and adjusted the

cap on his head. There was no use in letting the villagers think a Militiaman was anything less than perfect.

The door swung open to disclose an elderly, bearded man in the red robes of a physician. "Ah, a good morning to you, Captain. Here to see my patient, I presume?"

"That's right, Dr. Groom. May I come in?"

"Certainly. This way, please." The doctor led Jorvin into the living room.

The captain looked around him at the rough furniture and walls. "I admire you, Doctor; but I'm damned if I understand you."

"How so, Captain?" Groom seated himself, and motioned the officer to do likewise.

"Oh...living here, in this village, like a common citizen. A man of your rank could come to Cleve; there are still plenty of apartments left in the towers, and you'd have the advantages of magic."

"Captain," smiled the older man, "I have two reasons for living as I do. One: even the poorest of men deserves medical attention when he needs it. Two: the advantages of magic are greatly over-shadowed by the disadvantages of living in one of the ancient cities, like Cleve. Mind you, I am not irreligious; but in order to enjoy the blessings of Heaven, and the legacies of the Angels of Lilaar, one must pay attention to the rules. I am getting old, and my knees creak when I genuflect before the statues and other Art.

"But you came here to see the patient. Would you like me to call him?"

Jorvin shook his head. "Not just yet. I want to talk to you first. 'Call him', you said. Then he must have improved some; when we brought him to you, he might as well have been dead for all the co-operation we could get out of him."

Groom nodded. "His mind was gone. He was like a new-born child or worse

—a condition usually brought on by severe shock."

He glanced sideways at Jorvin and repeated: "A very severe shock."

The captain smiled. "All right, all right. I'll tell you. It doesn't matter now, but when we brought the man here three months ago, Lord Cleve gave me strict instructions not to mention anything about it. But, eventually, of course, the news had to leak out; so it won't do any harm now. Do you know where the village of Kreyne is?"

"Not exactly. Two or three hundred miles to the northwest of here isn't it?"

"About that. Now...do you remember anything unusual happening, a couple of days before we brought you your patient?"

Groom frowned. "No. No, not particularly, I—"

"Earthquake? Lightning?" prompted Jorvin.

"Oh, that.... Yes, I remember now. I happened to be awake at the time; just before midnight, as I recall. The whole house rattled, and there was a big flash of lightning to the northwest—"

He stopped suddenly. "What—?"

Jorvin said: "The entire village of Kreyne was destroyed by a mysterious explosion. Out of about fourteen hundred people, there were only three survivors—men who must have been close to the outskirts of the village. The other two died before we could do anything for them. Your patient is the third."

Groom looked dumbfounded. "I see. I see. Great Heaven! A whole village! No wonder the man lost his mind!"

"That," Jorvin continued, "is why Lord Cleve is taking such an interest in this man. He has sent a report to the Duke, who in turn, sent a report to the Emperor at Mayco City.

"His Lordship's orders—and therefore my orders—are to get all the information we can about this explosion from the only living man who saw it: your patient."

DR. GROOM rubbed a finger alongside his nose. "Why did you bring him to me, if I'm not being too curious?"

"To isolate him. There isn't any way to keep the folk in the cities from finding out about it. But here, the villagers have enough respect for you to keep them from prying.

"Now, what about the patient? Has he regained his memory?"

Groom shook his head. "Not yet. It's a very curious case. He had to learn to talk all over again, like a baby. He didn't take much time to learn; a couple of weeks and he could talk as well as the next man. He says he doesn't remember a thing—who he is, what he did, or anything else.

"I think, though, that I have uncovered some clues to his past. It is too bad that someone doesn't keep records on the inhabitants of each village; we might be able to go through the list of names and find out something that way."

"Ridiculous!" scoffed the captain. "Who would have the time to put down the name of everybody born in every village in the Duchy of Nomairka?"

"Oh, I don't mean *everybody;* I mean persons of rank. My patient was obviously a man of rank."

"Oh?... How do you know that?" The captain was curious.

"He can read. Or—that is—he learned to read in less than four days, which shows that he must have been able to do so before he lost his memory."

"Well, now, that's interesting. Any other clues?"

"Yes. I think he must have been a doctor—or, possibly, a medical student. Why do I think this? Because the other day I was reading one of my books which contains many words from the ancient language of Technical. A layman could hardly be expected to understand it, even if he could read.

"Anyway, while I was perusing the book, he came up behind me and began reading over my shoulder. It is against the rules of the Fraternity of Physicians to permit the laity to look at such books; but in this case I thought it could do no harm, since the book is a highly-advanced one. Even I could have made no sense of it without having had years of study. So, I pretended not to notice that he was looking over my shoulder.

"After a few minutes he began asking me questions—questions that he could not have asked if he had not been educated in the science of medicine."

Jorvin leaned forward. "What were the questions, Doctor?"

Groom shook his head. "I am sorry; it would be a violation of my oath to the Fraternity if I were to repeat them."

The captain grinned. "I was afraid of that." He settled himself back in his chair. "How old would you say this chap was, Dr. Groom?"

"Twenty-six or seven, I should say. Why?"

"Then he couldn't be the regular physician of Kreyne. I knew some people in the village, and I have heard them talk about the doctor there—Dorn was his name, I think—and he was an older man, a fellow with a white beard and long white hair. Couldn't be this man."

"No, but he might possibly have been Dorn's student."

The captain thought this over. "Say! I have an idea! It's a long shot, but it might work. You said he could read an advanced textbook. Maybe he was advanced enough to have been made an Interne; if so, his Lordship might still have the letter of recommendation from old Dr. Dorn!"

Groom snapped his fingers. "The very thing! And if you'll give me a moment, I'll write a letter for you to take to the Chief Physician of the Fraternity in Cleve City. He may be able to give you some information."

2

A SHORT time later, he handed the letter to Jorvin. "Would you like to see the man, now?" Groom asked.

"Where is he now?"

"Outside, chopping wood for me. He likes to be of some help around the house."

The captain considered for a minute, then said: "I don't think I need to see him. I'll get back to Cleve and look up our lead. I'll let you know, Doctor. And thanks for your help."

Groom watched the Militiaman get into the magic aircar, and watched it lift into the air and grow smaller as it moved toward the east.

He noticed suddenly, that the chopping sound from the rear of the house had stopped. His patient was watching, too.

TO: The Lord Cleve of Cleve
FROM: Erb Groom, M.D., F.F.P.

My Lord Cleve:

It is my pleasure to be permitted to write your lordship concerning the qualifications of my student, Crag Weldon, for the degree of Doctor of Medicine.

If your lordship will recall, Citizen Weldon was the sole survivor of the Kreyne disaster of eighteen months ago, and was at that time the student of the late Dr. Dorn, of that village. I wish to convey to your lordship my deepest gratitude in your lordship's indulgence regarding the discovery of Citizen Weldon's identity. It was not until he was told his name that he recalled any portion of his former existance. Unfortunately, his memory was—and still is—very sketchy; he was unable to convey any information to your lordship's representative, Captain Jorvin, concerning the explosion itself. Such was the shock of the disaster, it is my own humble opinion as a physician that he will never recall it completely.

However, since learning of his identity, I have had the privilege of instructing Weldon in the science of medicine by permission of his honor, the Chief of the Fraternity, whose endorsement I herewith enclose.

As your lordship knows, a two-year waiting period is required after the degree of Interneship is conferred before the doctorate may be applied for. Were it not for this rule, I would have written your lordship more than a year ago.

Crag Weldon is one of the most brilliant men I have ever known. He studies avidly, reading every book he can lay his hands on. I may say that he already surpasse my own ability; and within a few years will probably be one of the most renowned men in the Duchy of Nomairka.

I wholeheartedly recommend him, and would be deeply grateful if your lordship were to apply to His Grace, the Duke, for Crag Weldon's degree.

Most humbly yours,
Erb Groom, M.D.

My Lord Duke, I heartily endorse this recommendation.
Lord Cleve

TO: His Grace, the Grand Duke of Nomairka
The Grand Palace, Feymoor City

My Lord Duke:

I am taking the liberty to write your grace in the hope that your grace will extend to me—a humble and loyal subject—the bounty of your well-known kindness and generosity.

I am, as you know, the sole survivor of the great Kreyne disaster of two years ago. Because of this catastrophe, I have been rendered bankrupt, all my savings and belongings having been destroyed.

It is my desire to begin my practice in the city of Feymoor; and, in order to realize this ambition, I should like to borrow from your grace the sum of one thousand credits, to be repaid in any manner your grace may desire.

Hoping that your grace will find my humble self worthy of attention,

I remain your grace's most obedient servant,
Crag Weldon, M.D.

THE CITY of Feymoor was certainly different from the little villages in the hinterlands, Weldon noticed.

He had just come out of the huge underground central terminal of the ancient tubeway system, that connected all the Great Cities of Earth. It had taken nearly three days on horseback to get to the first terminal at the city of Cleve; but after that, the great automatic trains had finished the trip in hours.

Feymoor, like the other Great Cities, was incredibly old. Its history stretched back to the Golden Age of the legendary Lilaar, and the times of the War of the Heavens—when, according to legend, a group of demons known as the Thassela had come from an evil place in the stars to attack the peaceful angels of Lilaar, the six-fingered spirits of Art and Music.

The centuries that had passed since then had been kind to Feymoor. The parkways and the gardens were still carefully tended and beautiful; the only sign of age was the faint patina of gray that had dulled the pastel spires and towers of the fairylike buildings.

After a quick glance around, Weldon approached a bearded oldster who was

selling fruit in a small stand, one of the several which comprised a small market place near the terminal.

"Your pardon, citizen, but I am a stranger in the city, and am not well acquainted with it. Could you tell me how I might reach the offices of his grace, the Duke?"

The old man looked at Weldon, noted the scarlet robes of his position and replied: "Certainly, good Doctor."

He turned and pointed eastward, toward the river. "That tower, the blue one, higher than the rest, is the Palace. Just follow the pathways and keep it in sight and you can't miss."

"Thank you, citizen. Good day."

"Most welcome, sir. Good day."

Evidently, thought Weldon as he walked toward the Palace, *there aren't many physicians, even here in Feymoor —not when that much deference is extended to anyone wearing red.*

He still didn't understand all there was to know about this world he was in. In the past two years, the universe about him had seemed to unfold; the more he learned, the more there was to learn.

He had hated to fabricate a story to tell to old Dr. Groom; but claiming to remember his past life seemed the best way to get out into the world and discover for himself who he really was, and what purpose he had on Earth.

He thought of himself as Crag Weldon, and quite possibly he *was* Crag Weldon. But not the same Crag Weldon; somehow, he was different, now —different from all other men.

That energy flow in his brain: What was it? Why did *he* have it and no one else? It gave him a deep sense of power to know that at any time he could release that energy, let it flow along the nerves and muscles of his body, and he would have the strength and physical stamina of a hundred men.

Why was he here? What was he good for? He had to know.

A whispering sound overhead attracted his attention. An aircar of bright Militia green soared toward the horizon.

I wish I could get my hands on one of those things. Maybe I will.

After a half hour or so, the entranceway to the blue tower suddenly appeared around a bend in the path. On either side of the gate stood the guardsmen of the Duke's Own Militia.

HE APPROACHED the nearer of the two. "Good afternoon, sergeant. I should like to see his grace. I have a letter of passage."

Weldon produced the letter and handed it to the guard.

The sergeant peered at it carefully, making a great pretense of reading its contents; but all he could really recognize was the Seal of the Grand Duke at the bottom. He handed it back with a flourish. "You may pass, good Doctor. You will have to see the

Lord Secretary first. The guard in the main lobby will direct you."

The main lobby was filled with people. At a quick estimate there were seventy or eighty; some walking, some standing, some sitting or squatting. Weldon ignored them and strode on across the broad floor toward one of the green-clad men standing before the bank of elevators.

Aha! An officer. I hope he *can read.*

"Afternoon, Lieutenant. I was told to ask you where I could find the Lord Secretary."

The lieutenant smiled, but shook his head. "Sorry, Doctor, no can do. Oh, I could tell you where to find him, all right, but—" he waved a hand at the crowd "—you'd have to wait. There are fourteen persons of rank, and sixty-one citizens ahead of you."

Weldon produced the letter.

The lieutenant could read, all right. "Oh. A letter of passage, eh? Why didn't you say so? Did the outer guard tell you you'd have to see the Lord Secretary? The idiot! Not with this letter, you won't."

Weldon followed the officer into the nearest elevator, watched as the man pressed the uppermost of a bank of studs, and suddenly felt an odd pressure against his feet. "How does this device work, Lieutenant?" he asked.

"How does it work? Why, by magic, of course—just like the trains and the aircars. They were put here by Heaven during the Golden Age."

"Oh. I see." *Magic?* thought Weldon. *Now what kind of an answer is that? Magic, of course; but how does the magic work?*

The pressure stopped, and the door slid open. They came out into a large anteroom, at the opposite end of which stood an ornate desk, presided over by a large individual in an even more ornate uniform.

They crossed the floor. The lieutenant brought himself to a full stop about two meters in front of the desk, his heels colliding audibly.

"A Dr. Crag Weldon, sir." His voice was a crisp monotone. "With a letter of passage, sir."

"Very good, Lieutenant." The tone was one of dismissal. The lieutenant turned, walked across the room, and disappeared into the elevator.

By looking carefully, Weldon found he could discern a colonel-general's insignia set among the strands of gold braid which infested the lapels of the officer's tunic. One of the top layer of the upper crust of the ultra-ultra, no doubt.

"Your letter, Doctor," demanded the general, holding out a heavy hand. Weldon produced, and the general read.

If many more people read that before it gets back to the Duke, it'll be so worn his grace won't recognize it, Weldon reflected.

The general finished his perusal and rose. "If you will wait, Doctor."

Weldon inclined his head. "Certainly, Excellency."

The officer strode out on thumping feet, only to return in less than two minutes. "His grace will see you, Doctor. Through that door; turn to your left; press the button in the center of the big silver door with the star on it."

"I thank you, Excellency."

Weldon did as he was bid. When he pressed the button, a tinkling chime rang somewhere on the other side of the door.

"Now that's fascinating!"

SECONDS later, the door slid open, and he found himself walking into another huge room, lavishly decorated.

The Lilaar evidently went in for building in a big way, he thought. *One wouldn't think Heaven would be so pompous.*

On a couch at least three meters

long and half as wide—which ran along one wall of the room, just under a vast window—sat an old man.

"Come in, good Doctor," said his grace, the Duke of Nomairka.

Weldon approached and knelt. "I thank your grace for receiving me."

"Mmmh. Sit up here, beside me. No, now don't say anything; just let me look you over."

The duke pulled softly at the wealth of snow-white sideburn that ran along his cheeks, curved, and became a mustache over a firm mouth and a clean-shaven chin. "How old are you, Doctor?"

"Twenty-six, Your Grace." *At least that's what Lord Cleve's records said.*

"I suppose," the old man said softly, "that you realize it takes a great deal of brass to ask your Duke for a loan of a thousand credits out of a clear blue sky?"

"I—" Weldon attempted, but he was interrupted.

"Well, it did. And, under the proper circumstances, I admire brass. Tell me: are you a good physician?"

"Yes, your grace, I am."

"Hah. More brass. No false modesty about you, eh?" He paused for a long minute, looking at Weldon through shrewd, half-closed eyes.

Then: "If you're that good, can you fix *this?*" And from beneath his robe he drew his left arm; an arm obviously paralyzed and useless.

"Why, I don't know, your grace. Let me see it."

Weldon took the stiffened member in his hands, looked at it, felt of it. And something clicked in his brain.

There was something odd here. The appearance of this arm did not completely agree with the medical books in Dr. Groom's library! Not until just now had the actualities of fact about the human body been brought forcibly to his attention.

The books *did* contain factual data; data, however, that had a different meaning than he had supposed. *They* were books; *this* was an arm. There was a definite relation, but it was not as direct as it had seemed.

Now as to the arm—

Weldon looked up into the old duke's face. "I think I may be able to help you some, your grace. Just how much, I cannot say as yet; but some."

The duke's eyes narrowed still further. "How long will this process take?"

Weldon made a quick estimate. "Two weeks. Perhaps three."

The old man stood up, suddenly. When he spoke, his voice was like steel. "Young man, the best and most learned physicians in the Duchy of Nomairka have pronounced this arm incurable. It has been this way for twenty-eight years, since before you were born.

"My asking your aid was simply a test of your integrity; had you said, like an honest doctor, that it was hopeless, I could have trusted you. Instead, you prove yourself a quack and a charlatan.

"Two or three weeks, indeed! I like brass, yes; honest brass! Not the baser metal of the liar and cheat!

"I am revoking your degree! You may leave, *citizen!*"

Weldon's brain was whirling in high gear. "Your grace," he said levelly, "you are known throughout the Duchy as a fair man; a just man. And yet you have condemned me without trial.

"I ask only this: that you give me three weeks. At the end of that time I will have taken the stiffness from the arm and returned to it some ability to move. If I do not, I will suffer any punishment you name."

The duke looked at him for a long time with unreadable eyes. Finally, he smiled a grim smile and said: "More brass. Very well, Dr. Weldon. Your three weeks begin at dawn tomorrow. Tell Colonel-General Kroll to

give you the Bronze Suite—I think it will suit you. You may leave."

3

THE BRONZE Suite turned out to be just another oversized set of rooms, complete with bronze walls and lavish metallic bronze hangings.

Weldon ignored the room itself. He threw his robe over a nearby chair and lay down on the couch, looking out the window. The sun was a red-orange half-circle, partially obscured by streaks of purple cloud on the western horizon. Slowly, it settled out of sight.

By dawn, Weldon had a theory; by the next evening he had tested and partially revised it; three days later, it was in its final form. Two weeks after that—

"That's it, your grace; open and close the fingers slowly. Easy does it. Now: you were saying—?"

"Oh, yes. Well, as I was saying—ooh! careful, that tingles!—ah, as I was saying, some of these groups of people, have reverted to complete barbarism. They hide out up in the hills most of the time; but every so often they raid a village, kill the inhabitants, and make off with most of the women and food. What is left, they burn."

Weldon ran his thumb along the duke's elbow, letting the special force within him seep into the nerves and muscles in p r e c i s e l y measured amounts. "Isn't there anything your grace can do to stop them?"

"Except for arming the villagers, very little. Oh, we've chased them back into the hills two or three times, and we search for their hiding places by air; but, after all, there are only about a hundred and fifty aircars in the Duchy, and there are fewer all the time.

"Why, in my grandfather's time, there were nearly three hundred; but every few years, one of them loses its magic and refuses to go any more. I suppose that, within a century or two, air-travel will be a thing of the past.

"It's the same way with the death-pistols. I only have enough now to arm the outposts, and the City Police, and my militia. They have to be taken back to the Grand Armory and hung in the racks every so often to get the magic back; and sometimes one of them doesn't get it back. After that, it's worthless."

"I see. Now, let's see if you can't straighten that arm a little more, your grace."

The old man held the arm out, flexing the fingers feebly. "Why—why, it's nearly straight again." There were tears in his eyes as he looked. The arm was still thin, weak, and poorly co-ordinated in its movements—but it was an *arm* again.

"Why, it's just like magic!" he whispered.

Magic! The word thrust itself into Crag Weldon's brain like a knife. *There* was the connection! Somehow there must be a relationship between himself and the Palace. And if that were true, then—

Heaven! The legendary Angels of Lilaar!

Simmer down, Weldon, he told himself, *reason it out!*

He was suddenly aware that the Duke was speaking.

"—the highest medical position in the Duchy, good Doctor! I will register you with the Emperor in Mayco City within the week!"

HIS EXCELLENCY, the Lord High Physician of Nomairka.

stood in the dust-filled Hall of Records and looked at the rows of cabinets and drawers that lined the long aisles and corridors.

Where to begin? There didn't seem to be any beginning or end to it, just rank after dusty rank of silent cabinets.

His grace, the Duke, had said: "Certainly, Weldon, go ahead if you want; but I warn you, you won't find anything. Some years ago—in my grandfather's time, I think—the most learned men of the time formed the theory that the Hall contained some of the records of the Golden Age. They searched all through it. There isn't a thing there—no messages of any kind."

"Then why," Weldon had asked, "is it called the Hall of Records?"

"Who knows? It is a name passed down from the Golden Age. Perhaps it doesn't mean that at all. One thing we do know, and about which I must warn you. Nothing must be removed from the Hall; nor is it permissable to touch any of the Machines of Mystery, since they are connected with the magic that operates the Palace."

Well, there certainly didn't appear to be anything here but dust.

Where to begin? Might as well begin anywhere.

No locks on these drawers. Hmmm. Wire. Next? More wire. All wrapped up on little spools. No books *here.*

Well, what's in these cabinets? Disks. With circular grooves on them. No, not circular—spiral.

Oho! What have we here? Metal plaque of some kind on the door. Rub the dust off. Printing of some kind, obviously, but what does it say? Certainly different from ordinary printing. Words are odd—

Wait! Here's a clue! Difference in spelling; pronunciation probably different—

The plaque said:

EXAMPLES OF EARLY RECORDING METHODS

These spools of tape and wire, and the plastic discs and cylinders, were used over one thousand years ago and are some of the earliest known methods of recording sound. The information contained in the vast majority is of little historical value except to students of the subject, since better than ninety percent contain only music, sometimes with vocal accompaniment.

After twenty more minutes of rubbing the dust off various plaques, he finally came across one which read:

SONOREADER

And below that, another:

Insert globe in readercase, press Index stud. Dial Index number for proper section.

Globe? What globe? The only globe he had seen was the scale-model of the Earth, and certainly it couldn't be that.

Weldon walked back to the last cabinet he had looked at. The plaque had said simply: ABEC TO ABED. He slid the door open.

IT WAS NOT a cabinet. The panel before him was covered with nearly five hundred little buttons. At the bottom was a dial like the one on the reader.

He pushed some of the buttons, but nothing happened.

Weldon frowned. Logically, something *should* happen. Perhaps the magic had gone out of the Hall of Records. But that shouldn't be; the rest of the Palace was in fine working-order.

His inspection of the Grand Armory had shown that the magic flowed in through a pair of plastic-encased silver bars from some place in the base-

ment of the building; but since the basement was sealed off, he had never discovered the original source. Perhaps the magic flow here had simply been cut off by a switch similar to the one in the Armory.

It took him the better part of an hour to find the switch. The bars ran into a cabinet against one of the walls, and the cabinet seemed to be locked. He twisted and pulled on the catch lever, but it stayed firm. Finally, he did something he rarely permitted himself to do.

The energy—so similar, and yet so different from the magic that flowed through the building—flooded out of his brain and along his arms.

Weldon put his fingers under the edge of the catch lever and pressed. There was a snap as the lock broke, and the door slid back easily.

He relaxed to let the energy subside, then slid the master-switch home and closed the panel. The Hall of Records had magic again.

After that, it didn't take long to figure out how the panels worked. Subjects were listed by the letters of the ancient alphabet. When you pressed one of the little buttons, a voice began giving a list of titles, followed by a number. To get the title you wanted, it was only necessary to press the button in a little farther and dial the number with the other hand. Then the panel would buzz and disgorge a little black sphere from a tube at the bottom. The sphere—about a centimeter in diameter—fitted into a receptacle in the sonoreader. Press the Index button, and the reader called off the names of the chapters of the "book" and the "page" number. Use the dial again, and the reader began to read.

CRAG WELDON left the Hall of Records some hours later, quietly closing the great doors behind him and locking them with the key the Duke had given him.

He would have to formulate a plan to study. The amount of work ahead of him was now impossibly tremendous, and it would be necessary to pick and choose carefully. At a quick estimate, the Hall of Records contained over ten *billion* "books"!

That evening, when his servant was removing his supper dishes, Weldon had already begun to formulate his plans. He was deep in concentration, and thus was nearly startled when, after his table was cleared, the servant touched him lightly on the sleeve.

"M'lord—?" His voice was worried.

"Yes, Brill?"

"M'lord, I know it is not proper to ask, as I am only a nobody; but I am desperate, and even at the pain of your displeasure—"

"No man," said Weldon, smiling, "incurs my displeasure easily. What is it?"

"My wife, m'lord," answered Brill. "She is with child, sir, and her time has come. One of the doctors in the city came early this evening, but he says he can do nothing. He says the child will most certainly die, and that he holds little hope for my Dorine.

"Everyone knows what you did for his Grace's arm, m'lord. You are my only hope. Will—will you come?"

The servant's quarters occupied the first eight floors of the Palace, and

differed from the quarters of the higher personages only in that the furniture was not of metal and plastic, but wood, and the only decorations were those that were a permanent part of the wall.

"This is my apartment, m'lord," said Brill, opening the door.

The woman lay on the bed, obviously in agony. Beside her stood an elderly man in the crimson robes of a physician.

The doctor turned when Weldon entered, and his eyes went wide as he saw the golden sleeves on Weldon's own robe. "My Lord Doctor! I hardly know what to say!"

"Between physicians, sir, just 'Doctor' will do," said Weldon. "How is she?"

The other shook his head. "I hold little hope, sir. Here, let me show you."

The servant, Brill, watched nervously. The conversation of these men was too far over his head to make any sense of it; "pelvis" and "breech position" and "blood heat" were only so much jabber.

When Weldon had finished his inspection, Brill grasped his arm. "M'lord, tell me: can you and Dr. Starn do anything? Please, sir?"

Weldon placed a hand on the man's shoulder. "We can try, Brill; I think there is some hope."

He turned to Dr. Starn. "Will you assist me, Doctor?"

"M'lord," said Starn, "every physician in the city has heard of what you did for his Grace. I would be proud to work with you."

Yes, indeed, thought Weldon, *just to see if it's true.*

"Very well. And you, Brill. This is no place for a nervous father. Get out in the corridor and stay there until I call you."

"Y—yes, m'lord."

The next three hours were perfect torture to Brill. He went through all the torment that expectant fathers have suffered since the emotion of love was invented, unknown hundreds of millenia ago. He paced, he cursed, he chewed nails, and he wept.

After some thousands of centuries

of agony, he heard the door open.

"You may see your wife and daughter, now, Brill," said Weldon.

Brill charged past him as though he were trying to outdistance a tube train.

As he walked down the hall toward the elevators, Weldon heard Dr. Starn's words behind him.

"—and I tell you I could have sworn the child was dead. And all he did was hold it between his hands, like this, and—and it was *alive!* It's the most wonderful thing I've ever seen! Why, it's a miracle! An absolute miracle!"

A miracle? frowned Weldon as the elevator doors slid shut. *A miracle?*

THE NEXT several days were spent in formulating a method of study; a method whereby the maximum of information about himself and his past could be obtained in a minimum of time.

He had a set of key words that applied to himself; these must be attacked first. Magic. Miracle. Angels. Heaven.

And, by association: Lilaar, Thassela, and Golden Age.

It was an occasion for Feymoor City. The populace had received the proclamation from the Grand Duke only the day before the great event; but when the golden aircars landed, the great park in front of the Grand Palace was crowded with spectators.

In perfect formation they settled softly to the greensward, and for a few moments there seemed to be no life within them. Then the door in the lead ship opened, and a tall, rather thin young man with golden blond hair stepped out to meet the waiting Grand Duke of Nomairka.

It was the first time most of the people of Feymoor had ever seen his Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of Earth.

There was no wild cheering, as such an appearance might have brought forth from a similar crowd in Earth's past; there was only curiosity and a little awe. In the old days, a crowd cheered at the arrival of their sovereign for three reasons: because they loved him; because they feared him; or simply because it was traditional.

But tradition, here, did not call for such displays. His Majesty was the Emperor; that was all. His ancestor had been placed in that high position by Heaven—as had the Dukes and Earls below him. His duty was to govern, and to keep the Earth peaceful and lovely. There were no wars to keep him before his people as a conquering hero, therefore they did not love him. There were no exorbitant taxes, no terrorizing State Police, and no suffering of the poor that could be blamed on him; therefore, he was not hated. He was just the Emperor.

The old Grand Duke bowed low. "Your Majesty, I am pleased."

"The pleasure is mine, your grace." The return bow was not quite so low.

Together, they walked up the pathway, and into the blue tower. Behind them, after a few moments, the crowd dispersed and went about their business.

4

IN THE DUKE'S apartment, his Majesty was served with a cup of hot spice-tea and seated in the most comfortable chair, as befitted his exalted rank.

The Duke himself was in a complete fog. What could he say to the young Emperor? What did his Majesty want? Why this unprecedented visit? Wouldn't a letter or a call through the magic mirrors do as well? Couldn't he have—

"Don't fidget so, m'lord Duke," said the Emperor. "You make me nervous."

"Oh—ah—sorry, your Majesty, very sorry. I—er—"

The Emperor placed his cup on the table. "M'lord Duke, who is this Dr. Crag Weldon? I have been hearing tales of him these past two years."

All at once, the old man felt much better. Just the thought of Crag Weldon braced him up. "He is my Lord High Physician, sire."

"Oh, I know that." The Emperor waved a hand in impatience. "I mean what else? I have heard that he is a magician, or an angel, or something. Now, I know it couldn't be the latter—since everyone knows angels have six fingers on each hand and no hair. And I seriously doubt the former.

"Nevertheless, it is said that he is, and that is causing a disturbance among my people. Therefore, it is my duty to investigate. Come, now, who is he?"

"Your Majesty, he is just that—a magician. He can do most marvellous magic. Look! Do you recall my arm? He waved the member in the

air. "You saw it eleven years ago when I attended your coronation; it was withered and useless. Now it is as strong and well as the other! He refuses aid to no one; if someone is ill, a touch is all that is needed! But only, of course, if an ordinary physician can not help them. He is no mere doctor! He—"

"Calm yourself, m'lord Duke! There is no need to become excited. If you don't mind, sir, I shall ask my question for the third time: *Who is he?* I have heard of all the wonder he has performed."

The old Grand Duke's eyes were shining as he said: "Your Majesty, he is a representative of Heaven! He was sent from the Stars to Earth in order to bring back the Golden Age!"

The Emperor suddenly showed his interest. "How do you know all this?"

"He has told me," came the simple reply.

The Emperor looked at the lesser noble with the air of a man inspecting a zoological exhibit. The Duke began to fidget again.

"*He* told you?" The Emperor's inflection was only partially questioning. "Just how did he do this, m'lord Duke? I suppose he came up to you and said 'I am a magician by appointment from the Angels of Lilaar'?"

The old man looked into his superior's eyes, and his silver-white whiskers seemed about to bristle.

"Those are almost his exact words, your Majesty."

His Majesty didn't quite know how to take that. It set him back a little, as sarcasm always does when it backfires.

"Oh. And—ah—you believed him?"

"I do not believe a thing without substantial evidence, Majesty." The Duke felt himself on firmer ground, now. He was surer of what he should say. "I think, in this case, the evidence is substantial enough. Only a magician could do the things he has done. Only the Lilaar have the power to control magic.

"Therefore, this man is either an Angel in the guise of a human, or has been given that power by Heaven.

"He says he is the latter, and why should he lie? What could he gain?"

THE EMPEROR leaned forward, pointing a finger. "I'll tell you what he could gain. He could gain control of Earth if enough foolish villagers and city folk were to be fooled into thinking he is what he claims to be.

"And furthermore," he waggled the finger for emphasis, "furthermore, if he has all this power of magic, why did he not come to me? By the ancient law, I am the ruler of Earth, and Representative of Heaven. I do my job well and obey the law. Why, then, did the Lilaar give the power to him and not to me? And if they did give it to him, why did he not come to me?

"I'll tell you why! Because he is a fake and a liar! Oh, I know he has performed amazing cures; you don't need to display that arm again. But what does that prove? Nothing! He has simply discovered a new method of healing, that's all! And now he wants to take advantage of this secret to usurp the Imperial Throne. *And, by Heaven, fools like you are going to let him!*"

The Emperor stood up, his tall, almost too-thin body towering over the old Duke. "Well, m'lord Duke, I, for one, do not intend to permit it!"

He stalked over to the broad window and looked out for a long time. When he spoke again, his voice was calm. "M'lord Duke, would you be so kind as to ask this Dr. Weldon to come up here? I should like to speak to him."

For an instant, the old man hesi-

tated. Within himself, he was positive that Weldon was what he claimed. And yet he was equally sure that the Emperor was also a representative of the Lilaar, for didn't ancient law say so?

Then he realized that, if such were the case, the situation was too far above him for he, himself, to be anything but a spectator.

"I'll get him myself, your Majesty. But I—" He started to say that he thought it advisable for his Majesty to tread carefully, just in case, but he cut it off before it got out.

"I'll get him myself," he repeated, and went out the door.

●

The little sphere spun madly in the transparent case.

"Art, therefore, is sublime. Music and color and pattern are all only a part of ultimate beauty. They must be blended into a harmony of motion, a blend that affects each of the senses and flows into the brain through all channels. Only thus can Art achieve its goal: to put the knowledge of beauty into men's souls."

Weldon sat in the chair before the sonoreader, listening to the voice purr softly into his ears.

"Man, by himself, can never hope to attain this goal; it must be attained by the aid of man's protectors and guides, the Lilaar. When the essence of beauty is at last instilled in man, then, and only then, will he find happiness and peace. It is through—"

Someone was touching his shoulder. He turned his head, and the sound-beam, no longer impinging directly on his ears, ceased to be sound and became only a faint vibration in his head.

"Yes, your grace?" Weldon queried.

"I hate to disturb you during your meditation, my lord doctor," said the old Duke quietly, "but his Imperial Majesty, the Emperor, would like to speak to you."

"Certainly, I will be glad to." He reached out a hand and cut the reader off, then followed the Duke to the elevator.

THE EMPEROR was still looking out the window when they came into the room. When he heard them enter, he turned slowly and it seemed that he had only swivelled his stare like a searchlight, moving it from the exterior of the room to the interior without changing the focus.

"You are Dr. Crag Weldon?" His voice was level.

Weldon inclined his head. "I am, your Majesty."

"The magician?"

"Yes, Majesty."

"So made by the Angels of Lilaar?" The Emperor seemed to want to make very sure he had the right man.

"Yes, Majesty," answered Weldon.

"Tell me, then," the golden-haired man said softly, "why do you call me 'Majesty'? I have no such power as you. I am only the ruler of Earth. Should not that position be yours? Should I not call *you* 'Majesty'?"

"I am afraid your Majesty has been misinformed," replied Weldon levelly. "I am here to teach the way to beauty and peace, not to rule. Our duties are separate and distinct. Yours is to lead the people; mine is to teach them."

"I see." He paused for a moment, then: "Would you mind performing a miracle for me?"

Weldon blinked. *Why should he ask that?* he thought. "My power is to be

used only when necessary, Majesty—not for show, or personal whim."

The reply was savage in its intensity. "Then you mean you refuse? No! You mean you can not perform magic any more than I! If you could, you would stop the slaughter of my subjects by the barbarian hordes of the hinterlands; you would repair the magic that has been lost over the years by our aircars; you would, at the very least, repair our death-pistols so that we could fight them off ourselves!"

"The Lilaar," interrupted Weldon, "do not approve of killing."

"No? They don't, eh? Then why do they permit these barbarians to do just that? And—" The Emperor's hand went under his cloak, and suddenly there was a death pistol in it. "—and can they prevent me from killing you—now?"

Weldon's brain roared with urgency.

The barbarians! The killers! The Emperor! All willing to kill! This, then, is my purpose! I know the way, and now is the time!

The magic energy within his skull raced tinglingly through his body. The Emperor's finger was only beginning to squeeze the trigger when Weldon suddenly seemed to flicker. He was a moving blur that approached much too fast to even be seen clearly. A finger touched the wrist of the hand that held the gun, and the Emperor felt a surge of nerve-shattering power cut into him. He fell to the floor, still conscious, but unable to move.

"You asked for a miracle. Very well, the time is here for me to fulfill my purpose." Weldon turned and was gone, leaving a very frightened Grand Duke and a paralyzed Emperor behind him.

THE TRIP back to the Hall of Records seemed peculiarly slow to Crag Weldon. There was only one

thought in his mind. Here was his reason for being, here was his purpose.

He must return these people to the Golden Age. He must return to them the beauty they had lost.

He had located the magical device months before, but had not dared touch it until he was sure. And now he was sure; now he knew that he was destined to throw the switch that would bring peace and contentment back to the citizens of Earth.

There was a similar switch in every city on Earth, and it would be his job to activate them all.

The Emperor was coming slowly out of his paralysis, and the Grand Duke of Nomairka was helping him to his feet when it happened.

A soft chord sounded somewhere—anywhere—everywhere. The music swelled and pulsed and danced along its path through all space. And with it there came color and motion. The wall, heretofore drab, began to throb with all the hues of the spectrum, running and dripping and spinning with the music.

And outside! The whole city was a blaze of ineffable color, through which there came only the sound of the glorious, restful music.

"Now do you believe?" asked the Grand Duke, whispering.

"Yes," said the Emperor, and there was awe in his voice, "yes, now I believe."

●

The process did not take long. By means of the Emperor's own fleet of aircars, Weldon the Magician moved

from city to city, touching it with the magic of Lllaar. Soon the whole Earth sang in synchronized, perfect Beauty.

The people began to leave the villages and return to the cities to hear the work of Heaven. And the marauding barbarians came slowly out of the wilderness, and gave up their wretched life, for the beauties of the symphonies of Lilaar.

And who could doubt that Crag Weldon was a man above men? Was not all this his doing? There were a few who said that it seemed impossible—though they could not give any real reason why; and even those few voices were stilled when, in the fourth year of the New Golden Age, a great ship dropped slowly from the sky to land in Mayco City. From it stepped One who was hairless and had six fingers, and who said he had come to take Crag Weldon with him back to his home. And Crag Weldon went into the ship, and the ship lifted back into the sky.

The people were sorry to lose him, but they were happy for him.

RICHARD GORMAN finished his drink and set the glass suggestively on the table. "—and now that we have him, we'll keep him in coma until we get to Bardonis IV, where the specialists can have a look at him."

As John poured, he asked: "Well why all the precaution against his getting any information from a Type Alpha robot if he is a Type Beta?"

Richard shook his head. "I didn't say he was a Beta; he isn't. He's an experimental model. That's why I had to hunt all over this section of the Galaxy looking for Sam's ship."

"You mean that no one knew whether this Crag Weldon was telepathic or not? How come?"

"It's like this: A Gorr man is similar in physical construction to a human male. Take yourself, for instance: You are an example of the great Dr. Theodore Gorr's original d e s i g n—first manufactured nearly three thousand years ago for the purpose of winning the Thassela-Human war. It was a highly-secret project; the information was later lost to the humans themselves, which is why they do not know of our existance. Dr. Gorr's actual notes have, themselves, been lost, and we do not know for sure just how he worked out the basic idea. But, fundamentally, what he must have done was synthesize the original plasm and impress the molecules of the genes with the pattern he desired. Just as the molecules of the brain are the basis of the memory, so the genes are the basis for 'remembering' how the organism is to be constructed.

"The molecules of the gene construct all the similar cells of the body, including the brain. It was the gene-molecules, of infragenes, which Dr. Gorr worked on. After he finished his work, he taught the first Gorr man how to construct more. Then—he died. Three hundred years passed, during which time our experts worked on the problem of our construction. Finally, they did obtain one clue, linked with the infragenes that controls certain portions of the brain. They built the Type Beta robot.

"Since then, they have made very little progress. Most of our experimental models either die or are worthless. It is as if the genes were, in a sense insane; they give conflicting orders on how to build the mechanism, and the result is chaotic—or idiotic. We never know how one will turn out until it has completed the twenty-five year incubation period. It is unfortunate, perhaps, that the Gorr robot-design does not produce females."

"Don't stop," John said. "I'm mixing another. What was the matter with this model. Was he insane?"

"No, not in any ordinary sense. It was a case of improper weighting of data."

"How so? Here, take your drink."

"Thanks. Our cousin, in there, stayed in his incubation-tank fifty years longer than normal before the ship cracked up and threw him clear. The Earthmen found him, and thought he was human.

"His mind, during that time, was perfectly blank. He received no sense-impressions from the outside world. A tank is built purposely to shield the developing Gorr-man from any outside influence whatever—which is probably why he survived the explosion, among other things.

"As soon as he was exposed to the outside world, however, data began to enter his brain; he began to compute with that data. And the data wasn't properly weighted; he had no way to know how to weight it properly."

"As I understand it, it is necessary to weigh data against the facts of the real universe and use them accordingly. Right?" John asked.

RICHARD nodded. "That's right. If you multiply two ten-digit numbers in your head, you give all the digits equal weight. That is, you don't discard any of them because they are too small, or too large, or odd or even; they all have equal weight.

"That isn't so in the real universe. One has to compute with data in such a manner that one can be sure of obtaining an optimum answer. It isn't always possible, even with a perfect computer.

"Take our comatose cousin, for instance. He had plenty of data—he thought—to compute with. He knew he had a perfect computer and a perfect memory; so he assumed that any answer he came up with would be the right one. That was his first wrong computation, and it entered his memory as a datum. From there on in, it grew worse and worse. Remember, Johnny Boy, even the most perfect computer can not obtain a perfect computation with imperfect or faultily-weighted data. And it's a tough job to compute the degree of validity of a given datum when one has only other data to compute with—especially if a great deal of the original are faulty.

"Crag Weldon got a great deal of his data verbally, and from the printed word. He didn't make the old mistake of thinking that the word was the thing; his brain was better equipped than that. What he *assumed* was that he could deduce what the word *did* mean to the speaker or writer, and in that he was all fouled up.

"Then, he got hold of the information in the Hall of Records in Feymoor, which was loaded with Lilaarian propaganda. That convinced him that he had been sent to Earth to bring back the Golden Age of the Lilaar.

"The Lilaarians had an extremely long life-span—(they called it immortality)—and had a psychotic fear of death—which, by the way, inevitably defeated them. Their method of keeping Earthmen under control was the music-color hypnosis that they had perfected. They proceeded to change the existing form of government, the old Solar Federation, and set up semi-feudal planetary Empires.

"Since they could not kill any living, intelligent being, they simply intended to let humans die off by hypnotizing the breeding-instinct to a low level. They had already cut off all interstellar contact of the various human colonies, and they thought they could just wait until the planets were empty. Unfortunately, we Gormen could wait just as long, and had no unnormal fear of death to complicate things.

"The hard job, afterwards was for us to bring the humans back up to their previous level. We had computed that they must do it of their own accord—inasmuch as it would be al-

most impossible to control the results, if all those planets full of people were suddenly to be given interstellar science, after fifteen hundred years of sheeplike semi-barbarism.

"So, except for shutting off the hypnosis-mechanisms in the cities, we left them pretty much alone. Now and then, if the time is ripe, we give them a hint or clue, but that's all. And we're getting good results. The planets out near Ferridel are doing fine. Telsonn, for instance rediscovered the old interstellar drive nine years ago.

"But Earth—" Richard winced and shuddered. "Oooh, poor Earth! Johnny Boy, it's awful!"

"I see what you mean," laughed John. "Our confused kinsman, thinking he was an ambassador of the Lilaar, turned on all the hypnotic color-music recordings, undoing a thousand years of work. Too bad you couldn't have found him sooner."

Richard shrugged. "I didn't, though. I looked for that ship all over the area, but didn't find a trace until four years ago—when he set off our alarms by breaking those locks and repairing the switches. And I couldn't pick him up right away; I had to investigate."

"What can be done about it, now?"

Richard shrugged again. "Not much, right away. We'll have to get a group together to go back and shut those damned machines off again; and believe me, that is a job I hate. It's touchy. If you don't go about it right, the whole population is likely to go off its collective nut. I figure it will probably take another thousand years, now, before Earth is ready for interstellar contact."

The glasses tinkled as John Gorman poured and stirred. "What will they do with him on Bardonis IV?" he asked, indicating the tank room with a nod.

Richard Gorman looked at the little sparks of light that gleamed from the viewplates, then looked at his young cousin with a smug grin on his face. "What will they do with him? Same thing they'll do with you, boy— give him an education!"

★

Remembered Words

We're going to have to set a three-months deadline for those of you who've won originals to let us know which ones you'll like, because the old artwork piles up. Also, it's unfair to conventions — they want originals, too.

The fleeting finger of fame tickles the heads of Lyle Kessler, Cal Beck, and Jay Tyler, which same are hereby urged to delay not in letting me know their choices of originals from the May issue.

Oh yes — someone wants to know if votes have to appear upon the coupon to be counted, or if "tie" votes upset my rating system. Again — all votes are counted, whether they come in on a coupon, or the inside of an eggshell, so long as I can decipher your ballot at all. And don't worry about listing ties if that's the way you feel; my rating system can accommodate such easily — and it makes for a fairer estimate of over-all reactions.

Readin' and Writhin'

Book Reviews by L. Sprague de Camp

IN ADDITION to the spate of science-fiction books that have come off the presses in the past year, there have also been a number of non-fiction books of interest to science-fiction readers and writers. The books of Ley and Clarke on astronautics have been amply reviewed elsewhere and when, but there are other books of scientific speculation and critical literature on science fiction. I am reviewing several of these here.

First is "Modern Science Fiction, its Meaning and its Future", edited by Reginald Bretnor, N. Y.: Coward-McCann, 1953, xii + 294 pp., $3.75. This is a series of essays on various aspects of science-fiction. The editor is a former State Department writer, who has recently been contributing to many magazines from his home in Berkeley, Calif., including several pieces in FSF and *Galaxy*. Contributors include John Campbell, Anthony Boucher, Fletcher Pratt, Isaac Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke, and Gerald Heard, as well as Mr. Bretnor and your present reviewer.

Campbell's contribution, "The Place of Science Fiction," brings together ideas that have appeared in his editorials in ASF. He notes the development of science-fiction in synchronism with the passing of the Industrial Revolution into the Research Revolution, and the popularity of his magazine with younger technical men who will have to cope with the results of the latter upheaval. He hopes it gives them practice.

Anthony Boucher gives a realistic description of "The Publishing of Science Fiction," with facts and financial figures; he looks for a shrinkage in the number of magazines back to around a dozen. Don Fabun, in "Science Fiction in Motion Pictures, Radio, and Television," warns us that it will do no good to wail over the degradation of our genre as applied to these media. If you want mass entertainment you have to appeal to the masses, and you know *them*. Fletcher Pratt, in "A Critique of Science Fiction," lays a formidably-leaded lash across the backs of some of us who aren't writing as well as we should. Rosalie Moore intelligently discusses "Science Fiction and the Main Stream"; that is, non-imaginative fiction. Isaac Asimov, in "Social Science Fiction," explains how and why he uses actual historical patterns of events in futuristic stories.

Arthur C. Clarke, in "Science Fiction: Preparation for the Age of Space," runs over the history of fictional space-vehicles and assures us that when space-flight begins, interplanetary science-fiction won't stop. There will always be planets that we can't get to, or to which we haven't yet come. Gerald Heard, in "Science Fiction, Morals, and Religion," says that it is the function of science fiction to lay a groundwork of myth for the morality of the scientific age. And the editor, in "The Future of Science Fiction," sees a further growth of the genre, both absolutely and relatively.

Altogether you will find it an absorbing book, necessary for any student of the field. The only contributions to which I can take any umbrage are those of Philip Wylie ("Science Fiction and Sanity in an Age of Crisis") and myself ("Imaginative Fiction and Creative Imagination"). Mr. Wylie, as usual, is in a state of white-hot fury with human beings because they are

human beings, instead of all being as wise, brave, and just as Mr. Wylie. His piece is full of wild exaggerations, as when he says that because secrecy is maintained about atomic weapons, the United States has "abandoned democracy" and is living under a dictatorship. As for my piece, when I finished it I thought that it looked pretty good. But now that I can compare it with those of the other contributors, I wish that I could write it over.

A few minor errors: on page 101 (Miss Moore's contribution) it was Cleve Cartmill, not Murray Leinster (William F. Jenkins) who wrote the atomic story that excited the government's security agencies. Page 203: Art Clarke insists upon calling Lucian (Loukianos) of Samosata "Lucian of Samos." They were quite different places. And on page 217 he confuses Hal Clement (Stubbs) with a writer of the thirties, Harl Vincent (Schoepflin), referring to the former as "Hal Vincent."

THE NEXT book is "Dead Cities and Forgotten Tribes", by Gordon Cooper, N. Y. : Philosophical Library, 1952, 160 pp., 27 plates, $4.75. When I saw it announced, I feared lest it cover the same ground as Willy Ley's and my "Lands Beyond", which appeared at almost the same time, and told about the great geographical legends. But it turns out to be quite different: more of a handsomely-illustrated travel book about existing ruins and human oddments. Moreover, despite the natural temptation to make the reader's flesh crawl with wild surmises, Mr. Cooper has on the whole stuck close to fact. He has enlightened me on several controversial questions, such as the origin of the ruined city of Nan Matal (or Metalanim) on Ponape in the Caroline Islands. Atlantists have long cited this ruin as a remnant of Lemuria, and defied skeptics to prove otherwise. Cooper states that Nan Matal was not really a city but a ceremonial center like the Mayan "cities," devoted to the worship of the sacred turtle; that it is not of immemorial antiquity but was abandoned only about a century ago when Christian missionaries broke down the turtle-cult.

DO NOT MISS "The Next Million Years", by Charles Galton Darwin, Garden City: Doubleday, 1953, 210 pp., $2.75. The author, a grandson of the author of "The Origin of Species", takes an Olympian look at our prospects for the next thousand millenia, not for detailed historical events but for an idea of the *sort* of thing that we might expect, assuming that man will go on being much the same sort of creature that he has been hitherto. It will take about a million years for him to evolve into another species, after which no prophecies would be possible. The results are not encouraging, but Dr. Darwin is not trying to encourage us.

The first point he makes is that Malthus was right. Many thought that Malthus had been discredited, but they were misled by the facts that the European or white race, for the past century and a half, has been expanding into three new and sparsely-inhabited continents, full of unexploited resources, while the farmer's productivity has been increased many times over by the progress of science. So, for a while, this segment of mankind has eaten pretty well. But now the good vacant land is nearly all gone; and while science will undoubtedly further increase the yield per acre, that can't go on indefinitely. It is hardly conceivable that the yield could be increased a thousandfold; yet when its natural increase is not checked, the human race can increase its numbers a thousandfold in a mere thousand years. Therefore population will always be limited by the starvation of the "starving margin."

How about birth-control? The trouble is that only some people use it. Others do not, either because they are too poor or too ignorant, or because they have religious scruples against it. Therefore, if the people in one area practice birth-control and limit their numbers, their neighbors who do not will swarm into their land and swamp the original inhabitants. Fecundity still has survival-value when nation is pitted against nation. Then how about a world government to encourage or enforce birth-control everywhere at once? Dr. Darwin doubts if any world government will prove very strong for very long. While such governments may arise from time to time, the centrifugal and secessionist tendencies in human temperament will always break them down into separate warring nations or continent-states. He sees men always (with transient exceptions) organized into the rich few and the poor many. Wars may kill millions and reduce areas to barbarism, but will only slightly lessen the pressure of population on subsistence. And the ubiquity of scientific knowledge and literature assures that no barbaric regression will be more than local and transient. On the other hand the inevitable exhaustion of oil and coal will cause a round of wars, a shrinkage of population by famine, and a permanent lowering of cultural standards.

One of Dr. Darwin's least-palatable predictions is that unpleasant type—the bully—has a high survival-value because of his strength, courage, callousness, and selfishness. Therefore he is likely to become a larger and larger fraction of the population. Perhaps some nations noted for their bullies are merely a little farther along this evolutionary path than the rest.

While no ray of sunshine, this coldly logical book, written in a suavely lucid style like that of V. Gordon Childe, is a must for science-fiction writers. I think I have obtained a novel idea from it already.

THE MOST important non-fiction work relating to science fiction, however, is

none of these, but is Donald Day's "Index to the Science Fiction Magazines, 1926-1950", Portland: Perri Press, 1952 xv + 184 pp., $6.50. This is absolutely invaluable to any science-fiction writer or fan. It lists all the stories appearing in fifty-eight magazines of imaginative fiction (or to be more exact, magazines bearing fifty-eight different titles) during the second quarter of this century. The stories are listed by author and by title, the pseudonyms of each author are listed, and the book even contains a list of individual issues with the names of the cover artists, and tells who edited which magazine and when. The only significant omission is the unfortunate one of *Weird Tales*, of which the fabulously-industrial compiler did not have a file.

A YOUNG science writer, Martin Gardner, has come out with a book that I should like to have written, and probably should have written if he hadn't beaten me to it: "In the Name of Science", N. Y.: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1952, x + 320 pp., $4.00. This is an expose of pseudo-scientific doctrines, cults, and leaders, whom Mr. Gardner vivisects in much the way that I have been doing in the pages of this magazine. He tees off on the flat-earthians, Velikovski, the flying saucers, dowsing, the fundamentalists (including Dr. Mortimer J. Adler, the "great books" enthusiast), Lysenko, Atlantis and Lemuria, pyramidology, medical and dietary cults and quackery, and many others. He has done a sound and thorough job of research. In a number of cases he has taught me new things about cults and beliefs that I thought I was already pretty familiar with, and has evidently unearthed sources that I had missed in my own researches. Mr. Gardner takes a somewhat more serious view of these manifestations of irrationality than I do; but then, when he wrote the book he had not read Dr. Darwin's book and so might still have thought that there was some hope for man to achieve a rational civilization. In any case the book is most highly recommended.

THOSE WHO base stories on ancient myths will like "The Oldest Stories in the World" by Theodor H. Gaster, N. Y.: Viking Press, 1952, x + 238 pp., $5.00. The author retells, in simple modern English, thirteen stories from the enormous corpus of clay documents that have been dug up in the Near East in the last half-century, some of which have not yet been translated. Stories include Babylonian, Hittite, and Canaanite tales: Gilgamesh, Marduk and Tiamat, and less-known ones. Some are quite amusing.

PEOPLE who like antiquarian puzzles will be attracted by "A Study of Writing: The Foundations of Grammatology" by I. J. Gelb, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952, xv + 295 pp., $5.00. This brings up to date all the old problems involving the Mayan and Minoan and other unsolved—or half-solved—scripts up to date, and discourses on the evolution of writing from primitive pictographs. Some contentions are arguable. Thus Gelb goes to great trouble to prove that Egyptian hieroglyphics were not a consonantal alphabet, but a syllabary in which the vowel could have any value. It must have been thus, he says, because in all other cases logographs evolved into syllabic symbols before they became alphabetic letters. Not only is this questionable logic, but also the distinction between a symbol for R, say, in a consonantal alphabet and a symbol meaning R-plus-any-vowel in a syllabary is more a verbal than a real distinction. Still the book is worth while.

THOSE OF you who read my piece on "The Great Charlatans" in one of Bob Lowndes' magazines can learn the rest of the incredibly lurid, uniquely-fantastic story of Aleister Crowley, the master occultist, in a full-length biography of him that has just appeared, "The Great Beast: The Life of Aleister Crowley" by John Symonds. My copy is the English edition (London: Rider, 1951, 316 pp., 21s.) but the book was published last fall by an American publisher as well. The book is mature, well-written, and impartial, with flashes of ironic humor. It goes into such matters as Crowley's satyriasis and his drug-addiction; during his later life he was daily consuming enough heroin and cocaine to kill a roomful of ordinary men. I may add two minor corrigenda: Mr. Symonds, who interviewed Crowley himself before the latter's death—as well as all of his friends, foes, and victims that he could locate—changed the names of two of the women in Crowley's life, Leila Waddell to "Edith Y—" and Leah Hersig to "Leah Faesi." One of them was still alive when he wrote, and he thought the other was; English libel-law being what it is, he had to be careful.

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In our next issue, Sir Sprague examines the "scientific" and primal basis of astrology. Watch for "The Stars in Their Courses".

Advice From Tomorrow

by Mack Reynolds

(illustrated by Milton Luros)

Whether this was the fantastic truth, or the most fantastic of hoaxes, it was one of the greatest events in human history!

THE CITY EDITOR had warned me to keep Professor Jerome Lee away from the other papers, it was costing us a thousand bucks for his expert opinions; but there wasn't any need to worry about it, they all had experts of their own present.

The police had thrown up a rope fence around the monument about twenty feet away. Fifty feet further back was still another barrier, to keep off the crowd of three or four thousand curiosity-seekers. Within the second rope were a hundred or so police, newsreel men, F. B. I. agents, radio commentators, city officials, television technicians complete with equipment, scientists, reporters and others. I had a hard time getting in.

I found Professor Jerome Lee talking to another physicist who had flown in from Chicago. Lee introduced him as Stephen Milan and they went on with their animated conversation using terminology half of which went by me.

I excused myself to go over and join Larry Casey and Jack Fleming, who were standing with their hands in their

pockets, their hats on the backs of their heads, gazing glumly at the monument that marked the site of the time needle. Fleming had been newly-appointed science-editor of the *Dispatch*, and from his attitude he was going to be out after Casey's blood if this story turned out to be the farce he thought it was.

Larry Casey was the only adult who'd seen the phenomenon thus far. Half a dozen kids, playing in the area, had reported it to usually scoffing parents over a period of the last couple of months; but it wasn't until the *Dispatch*, short of assignments, sent Larry over to try and drum up a story, that the manifestation hit the headlines.

Casey had reported a shimmering in the air, and a faint suggestion of human shapes within it. If it hadn't been for the testimony of the kids, his city-editor would have probably laid it to Casey's drinking-habits; but as it was, the story hit the front page. Now, here we all were, hoping it would show up again.

THEY NODDED to me and continued to eye the monument.

"How does the *Globe* take this?" Fleming asked me glumly.

I shrugged. "We're waiting to see. My boss thinks it quite an angle that the thing happens right at the site of the time needle they buried here back during the World Fair." Neither of them said anything, so I asked. "Who's this guy Stephen Milan—the one Professor Lee is talking to over there?"

"A crackpot," Fleming growled. "He used to have quite a reputation, but the past couple of years he's been working on time. He's supposed to be quite an authority. You know, time-travel, that sort of rot. An A-1 crackpot." Jack Fleming was a long-faced, lanky character, impatient of anything off the beaten track.

I indicated with my thumb the various pieces of equipment sitting around the enclosure. "What's all that stuff?"

Casey snorted, wrinkling up his map of Ireland in disgust. "Everything from movie-cameras to devices for studying cosmic rays. If it starts again, it'll be the most analyzed phenomenon in history."

"They better start analyzing then," Fleming grated; "it's starting now."

A long, low sigh emanated from the throng. Within the inner enclosure G-Man and physicist, reporter and cop, television technician and scientist, stiffened and stared. Some of them leaped to the mechanical equipment that had been brought to record or analyze the freak manifestation.

It developed much as Larry Casey had described in his story of the day before. I scowled, then suddenly remembered of what it reminded me. Two years previously, I'd driven to the Coast on a vacation. Crossing the deserts in Nevada and other western states had offered somewhat similar views. The heat waves, related to the desert mirage, that arose from the hot road stretching ahead, gave much the same effect as the sight before us now.

It intensified slowly, and then, seemingly, the shimmering air thickened. I could feel the tenseness in Larry Casey next to me. Then, vaguely discernible, waveringly, we could make out something within the shivering air. A hazy view of a large, machinery filled room; two barely seen human shapes.

Casey grabbed the *Dispatch* photographer, who had approached when the phenomenon started, by the arm. "Quick, get in there closer and get some shots. Hurry, you goon!"

The cameraman shook off his hand. He was trembling, his eyes bulging. "If you want any close shots, get in there yourself."

Casey cursed, grabbed the cameraman's Speed Graphic and sped toward the monument. He ducked beneath the rope-barrier, and approached to within a few feet of the developing scene.

He withdrew the slide hurriedly, and flicked the camera up to his eye.

A cop yelled, "Get that nut out of there." He didn't say who was to do the *getting*.

Casey seemed to waver. He stiffened, half turned, a vague expression on his face. His hands suddenly relaxed and the camera dropped to the ground. At the same time the shimmering was over and the vicinity of the monument returned to its impassive appearance of ten minutes before.

WE RUSHED toward the *Dispatch* reporter. By the time we were at his side, he had lost the appearance of eminent collapse. But what got me was the complete change in his facial expression; from the typical newspaperman of ten minutes ago, he had changed to a serious-faced, quiet-appearing, but alert individual. He showed no recognition of any of us.

"What happened," Fleming snapped.

Larry Casey looked at us interestedly. He spoke with a slight touch of accent that'd never been in his voice before. "How do you do," he said. "My name is Frederick 10A434K. Are there any men of science among you? My time is limited."

We stared at him blankly.

"Come, gentlemen," he said. "Certainly someone here speaks of this language, English."

Jack Fleming growled, "What's the matter, Casey? You hurt?"

Larry Casey frowned. "My time is quite limited. You seem to speak English. If at all possible, I would like to see immediately men of science. Even more I would appreciate the opportunity to converse with Elliot Quana. This is 1953, Christian calendar, is it not?"

Somebody behind me muttered, "Who's Elliot Quana?"

Stephen Milan, the Chicago physicist, had pressed closer. He was eyeing Casey narrowly. "Who are you, and where are you from?" he asked, excitement in his voice.

Casey turned his eyes to him. "You have authority here? You are a man of science?"

"I'm a physicist. If you..."

Casey interrupted him. "Take me to a secluded place at once, and have as capable a physician as possible check me immediately. I do not know how long it will be practical for me to inhabit this body without it being endangered."

Professor Jerome Lee stood beside Milan. "Good Lord," he said, "this is extraordinary." He ran his eye over the swelling group surrounding Casey. "Doctor Williams, please," he called. Then he yelled it louder. "Doctor Williams!"

We parted and let Williams through. He was a fiesty little man, so nervous that he looked as though he could use some medical attention himself. His eye was ticking with excitement. I placed him as one of the city's most noted physicians.

He wasted no time in attempting to look Casey over. "To a hospital at once," he ordered. "Whatever it is, a hospital at once. Get Doctor Brighton and Fellows, we'll..."

SOMEHOW, Jack Fleming and I managed to squeeze along. Two hours later we sat in the reception room of a large suite in a swank Long Island hospital. Thus far, we hadn't been allowed to enter the room where they had Casey. Originally composed of Dr. Williams, Professor Lee, Stephen Milan and the two or three other prominent specialists who'd been at the monument at the time of the incident, the group inside had been augmented by wide eyed phys-

icists, research chemists, mathematicians, and even an astronomer. We couldn't coax a word out of any of them as they hustled by us and into the room.

Next to me sat Elliot Quana, who seemed more completely bewildered than anyone else. They'd picked the old man up at his home in Brooklyn and rushed him to the hospital about half an hour before; he hadn't the vaguest idea why. Every once in awhile, someone would come from the inner room and ask Quana a question. As time went by, there seemed to be a subtle change in their attitude toward him. Their first questions had been brusque; now they stared at him in what was almost awe.

I went to a phone and called the city desk for the half dozenth time. "Listen," I said, "get somebody on this Elliot Quana bird. Whatever's developing, he's in it knee-deep."

I got a grunt from the other end of the line. "What'd'ya think we're doing here, sleeping? We've checked on him from a dozen different angles already. He's a screwbox; a reformer working for a world government run by technicians, engineers and scientists. Matter of fact, one of the boys here covered a talk of his about two years ago. Only about fifteen people in the audience. He had a book he was selling; told all about his plan. Personally, I think the whole rigmarole is a hoax, and that..."

I interrupted him. "I think you're right, but why don't you get an option on the rights to run his book in serial form in the *Globe* before somebody else thinks about it? You never can tell..."

"I already tried," he told me. "The *Star* beat us to it. What's this guy Quana got to do with the phenomenon anyway?"

"You got me," I told him. "All I know is that Casey asked for him after being fuzzed up by the shimmering air."

"Try and get in there, Mike," the city editor growled. "You and Jack Fleming are the only two men on the spot. Every other paper in town is pulling wires like mad. They're yelling their heads off because only *Globe* and *Dispatch* representatives have been allowed in the hospital. Get a beat on this before they figure an angle."

I hung up and went back to my chair; five minutes later Fleming and I were called into the mystery room.

LARRY CASEY sat in an easy chair, calm and collected and looking nothing like the easy going fellow I'd known for years. The others were on their feet and looked as though they were suffering from shock.

Professor Jerome Lee assumed the job of spokesman. "We wanted you to come in for a double purpose. First, because you've known Mr. Casey for some time; and, second, because all this must be released to the press sooner or later, regardless."

This was a break for me. At least he was remembering that the *Globe* was greasing him. It was too bad Jack Fleming had to be there, too.

Professor Lee went on carefully. "This seems unbelievable, unbelievable; but the scientific approach demands that we keep an open mind. Try to follow me. I assure you it will be most difficult."

"We're newspapermen," Fleming told him sourly. "We've heard screwy things before."

Lee scowled, as though at the terminology. A voice behind him muttered, "Not this screwy."

The physicist cleared his throat and went on. "Mr. Casey, here—or Frederick 10A434K—claims that his body is in the control of a mind from the future. Or, perhaps, I should say that Frederick 10A434K claims that he is in control of Mr. Casey's body." He stopped, already confused.

I stared at him. "What'd'ya mean 'the future'? What future?"

Larry Casey said easily, still with that slight touch of accent in his voice. "There is only one.... At least to the best of knowledge. Though, as a matter of fact, part of the purpose of this experiment is to discover whether there are possible alternative futures."

Now I knew why the rest looked as though they'd had a siege of battle fatigue.

"What experiment?" Fleming grated. "What's the matter with you Larry?"

Stephen Milan broke in. "He contends that he is from—well, what would be the 22nd Century if the present calendar had been kept in effect. The phenomenon at the time-needle has been an attempt at time-travel. This reporter's brain and body has been taken over by a mind from the future."

"Nuts," I said in disgust. "This is a hoax; the *Dispatch* would pull anything to build circulation."

JACK FLEMMING started to say. something to that, but Professor Lee held up a hand to silence him. "Young man," he said to me, "do you think us incapable of exploring that possibility? You see represented here prominent men in half a dozen sciences. Your Mr. Casey, or Frederick 10A434K, has given us ample and astounding evidence that he is far in advance of any of us. The few comments he has made on such subjects as nuclear fission in the past hour are more than enough to keep me at work for the rest of my life in research. I assure you that if this body is not in the control of a mind from the future, then your Mr. Casey is a genius beyond all understanding."

Dr. Williams spoke up. I noticed his eye still ticked with excitement. "In five minutes, he gave me sufficient information to advance medicine a hundredfold."

My eyes went to Larry Casey skeptically. "How is it done? How do you travel a couple of hundred years back in time?"

He smiled ruefully. "I'm afraid it would be most difficult for me to make it clear."

"Why?" Fleming snapped beligerently. "Make it as simple as you can. We'll be able to follow well enough for it to either make sense or nonsense."

Casey still smiled. "How would you like to explain to an Australian bushman how to make an electric-light bulb?"

"These gentlemen here aren't bushmen," I said.

"Believe me, the science of my day is immeasurably further in advance of yours than is yours in advance of the bushman."

Fleming grated, "Why should it be? You said you were from only two hundred years in the future. It's taken the human race several thousand years to get this far above the savage."

"Your argument doesn't hold, I'm afraid," Professor Lee said. "You see, developing human knowledge is a geometric progression. The discovery you make today allows for two tomorrow; which, in their turn, make way for four more discoveries the day following. If this man is truly from the future, we are intellectual babes compared to him."

"I'd still like to have him try and explain it," I said.

"All right," Frederick 10A434K said, "we'll at least try. The process is known as Time Transfer, and the seeds of its accomplishment are being sown even today. In fact—if I am correct in my history—you are about on the verge of discovering the true nature of the mind and of the brain. I understand that experiments are taking place at one of your universities."

"Duke," Stephen Milan murmured.

Jack Fleming snorted.

"It will be found," Casey went on, "that it is possible for the mind—independent of the brain and of the physical body—to travel forward or back in the time dimension. Memory, actually, is nothing more than that. Memory, mental telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, are the ability of the mind to travel, independently of the body, through both time and space.

"For a considerable period, our efforts were directed toward attempting to move the whole body, with the mind, through time. We thought it possible to stimulate a mind, through the brain, to exercise psychokinesis, the influence of mind over matter, to the point where it could draw the body through time to the point upon which the mind was dwelling. This isn't as far-fetched as your faces indicate you believe. The mind's tendency is always to attempt this. Sleep-walking is an example; the mind of the sleepwalker has successfully forced the physical body to follow where the mind has chosen to go in unconscious sleep.

"However, it proved impossible to move the human body through time; at least it has thus far in our work. We settled, instead, upon sending back only the mind, which we have trained to take possession of another body."

"How?" Fleming grated, his voice as skeptical as mine.

FREDERICK 10A434K hesitated. "I told you it would be difficult to explain. But even today some minds are strong enough to take command of another. Simple hypnosis you are familiar with. Our need was to utilize a strong and highly-trained mind from our age to seize a susceptible brain from yours. When your friend, Larry Casey, approached our—shall we say 'bait,' I was able to take over the use of his body and brain. The principle difference between this process and simple hypnosis is the fact that my mind had to come back from the future for its accomplishment."

My head was swimming but I had another question. "Why did you pick 1953? Why not even further back? And if you've discovered how to travel in time in your century, why haven't histories recorded some of the time-travel that happened to past centuries?"

He smiled. "We *have* gone even further back. Sometimes quite successfully. And history, and legend, does record some of the instances. Unfortunately, the further back we go, the more difficulties occur when we attempt to make our presence known. Several of the bodies of which we have taken possession, have been burned as witches; most have merely been thought of as insane. It takes a semi-enlightened age, such as yours, to accept the situation and react in such a way that the Time Transfer is of value to us in our studies.

"We picked this particular date, 1953, in order to have the experience of personally conversing with Elliot Quana. I myself have made attempts to contact Alexander the Macedonian, and Leonardo Da Vinci; but unfortunately, both attempts were met with failure. In the first case, the body in which I took residence was killed by the drunken lout's bodyguards. In the second, the body was burned at the stake by orders of Ceasar Borgia. I had little time to associate with Da Vinci."

Fleming scowled and grated. "Who the devil is this Elliot Quana?"

Stephen Milan answered him. "According to Frederick 10A434K, he has missed hitting the exact spot in time that he expected by approximately six months. He says that within that period the world government advocated by Quana will be established, and Quana will go down in history as the greatest liberator of all time. An era of peace, security and abundance is

about to be inaugurated through his guidance."

"You mean that little duck out there in front is scheduled to rule the world?" I felt like laughing.

"You'd best read his book," Professor Jerome Lee said stiffly, "Quana has no desire to rule the world; he doesn't even want a position in the government. He is merely advocating a new form of social-system which he believes will eliminate war, international jealousies, and domestic economic problems, as well as a good many other evils that beset present society."

I eyed him narrowly. "You sound as though you're already sold on the idea."

He didn't answer. I looked at the rest of them. With the exception of the F.B.I. man—and even he seemed to be in doubt—it was clear that they had all accepted the fact that Larry Casey's body was in the possession of a mind from the future.

Thus far, both Fleming and I had been cynical New York newspapermen looking for the angle in a screwy story. All of a sudden the significance of the thing hit me.

"Good Lord," I blurted, "where's the telephone?"

AFTER THAT, the story reached a magnitude that took it out of my hands. Every available man on every paper in the city was assigned to the covering of Frederick 10A434K. *Associated Press; United Press, INS,* and every other news service, national and international, had their men swarming to the scene. Radio and television took it up and it was practically impossible to switch on a set without getting bulletins on the development of the story.

Publishing-companies in half of the countries of the globe were grinding out Elliot Quana's book on world government. Hollywood was rushing through a short on the *March of Time* order to show the workings of Quana's system. Already there was talk of political parties being organized to advocate the change. It was pointed out that the Constitution provided for its own amendment and that, consequently, the whole Quana program could be legally adopted whenever the majority of the people desired to amend the law of the land to that extent.

The thing that went furtherest in convincing the average citizen was the stimulus given Frederick 10A434K to science. A dozen of the most fundamental problems and puzzles were solved by his revelations. The scientific journals were on fire and rushing out special editions; and even the layman understood enough from the newspaper accounts to realize the tremendous steps human knowledge was taking.

And suddenly Frederick 10A434K was gone. On the sixth day following his appearance, in the midst of a discussion with various national leaders, he had calmly announced that it was unsafe for him to stay in Casey's body for a longer period. I wasn't present, of course; but those who were reported that a sudden change seemed to come over his body. His eyes went dull, and he dropped into a coma. An hour later, Larry Casey sat up in the hospital room to which he'd been rushed and wanted to know where the hell he was.

I didn't see Casey in the event-packed week that followed, but I understand that he was having a desperate time trying to answer endless questions that were meaningless to him. The last thing he could remember before awakening in the hospital, was dashing toward the phenomenon at the time needle monument, in hopes of getting a picture.

Finally the report went out that he'd disappeared. It caused a mild sensation but the real news of the day was the progress of the Quana movement,

which was beginning to sweep the world.

I FOUND him in Sam's Bar, the same old Larry Casey, slopping up a few brews. He looked as though he'd been through the mill, the hard way.

He glared at me. "My being here is strictly off the record." He pushed his hat to the back of his head. "No story, see? Cripes, what a nut-factory this town has turned into. Everybody's gone batty."

I grinned at him. "Don't tell me you don't believe in Time Transfer."

"Do I look stupid?" he growled.

"Nor the Quana movement?"

"I haven't even bothered to find out what its all about."

Jack Fleming came in and his eyebrows went up at the sight of Casey. "Hey," he said, "you're news, Larry."

"The hell I am," Casey said bitterly. "You say anything about finding me and I'll break your neck. I'm quitting my job and getting out of this town; they'll drive me screwy. How about another beer, Sam?"

Sam had gone down the bar aways to wait on a tall stranger who'd just entered. The stranger had eyed us narrowly, then sat down and ordered his drink. Sam served him, then drew three beers, cut off their heads, and slid them expertly over to us.

"So you haven't even bothered to find out about the Quana movement?" Fleming asked.

"Nuts to it," Casey grunted. "I was unconscious for maybe a week, and when I come to the whole world's gone batty. I can't trust it not to go to pot the minute I turn my back."

Fleming said seriously, "There's big things happening in this world of ours, Larry. Great things, and you're lucky to have played your part in them. A year from now..."

Casey interrupted sadly. "Even my drinking-friends have gone back on me. That settles it; I'm leaving this part of the country."

The stranger, who'd been listening in on our conversation, said softly, "Yes, I suppose that would be the best manner in which to work out your present situation. Show yourself, after disappearing as you have, to some old drinking friends; pretend you're against the Quana movement and that you don't even believe your body was occupied by a mind from the future. Then really disappear for good. That would cover the trail. It would be dangerous if you were questioned too far; one of these F. B. I gentlemen, for instance, might turn up something suspicious. Your group attempted to cover every contingency, but you can't be too careful.... Yes, your best plan would be to disappear permanently."

"What are you talking about?" Fleming grated.

THE STRANGER smiled mockingly. "Wake up gentlemen; you have the greatest news-story of your careers in your hands. I refer to this Quana plan—this attempt on the part of Quana, a group of scientists and your friend Larry Casey, to take over the governing of the planet."

"You're losing your marbles, friend," I sputtered. "This is big stuff; the real McCoy."

Larry Casey said, "One more screwball."

The stranger didn't lose his smile. He said, "I am sorry for you, Mr. Casey. I realize the sincere effort you must have made in this attempt. It undoubtedly took years of preparation."

I felt a twinge inside me. "Keep talking," I ground out. "Start making sense."

"Certainly," the stranger said easily. "It must have begun not long after Hiroshima. Half the technicians in the world suddenly awoke to the fact that their science was developing much too fast for the progress of so-

ciety. They were giving mankind discoveries too advanced for a planet that still went to war at the drop of a hat, or the clink of a dollar. Unfortunately, they couldn't suppress such discoveries as the atom bomb and bacteriological warfare methods. You can't unsolve solved problems any more than you can, er...unscramble scrambled eggs. Their problem, then, was so to change society that science could continue to progress, without the fear that its discoveries would be utilized to destroy the world.

"A good many of the more prominent research-men wrote books, or broke into the newspapers and magazines with articles that viewed with alarm or warned of disaster to come; but they had little or no effect on the way things were trending.

"But one group was more practical. They sat down and figured it out carefully. They finally decided that the only solution was to take over the government themselves—not only the government of the United States, but of the world."

"This gets crazier as we go along," Fleming grated impatiently.

"I'm getting used to crazy people," Larry Casey said. "Why don't you shut up, buddy," he told the stranger.

That was a mistake, asking the guy to shut up. My news-instinct prodded me, dominating the sickness that was beginning to well up inside. "Go on, fella," I said softly. "Tell us more."

"It should be clear to you," he continued, ignoring Larry. "They planned it carefully. Casey, here, played the part of the newspaperman who was to have his body taken over by an all knowing mind from the future. He must have got the job on the *Dispatch* and begun to build up the background several years ago. I imagine that a thorough investigation will reveal him to be a highly-trained technician himself; probably one who has made his mark in some line far removed from journalism."

JACK FLEMING broke in, "But how about the phenomenon out in Flushing?"

"Think it over," the stranger told him, "and you can see how easily it could be done. One of your news-accounts described it as similar to the heat waves you see in the desert. It would take a very small machine to duplicate that effect, and I don't think the problem insurmountable to the engineers and technicians included in the plot."

I said, "But the last time it appeared, we all dimly saw a room with figures in it through the shimmering air."

"Certainly you did. You saw it dimly—*very* dimly. But remember all of those instruments that Professor Lee and Stephen Milan and the rest of them had? Obviously, one of the devices was a disguised motion-picture projector of some sort. They simply threw an image on the hazy air they'd produced."

Larry Casey didn't act drunk any longer. "Nobody is going to believe that," he said hoarsely. "They all want this chance for the peace and security that the Quana movement can quarantee them."

"They want it now," the stranger said decisively, "but they'll change their minds over night when the story breaks, and they find they've been hoaxed."

"It'll be impossible to prove; you'll be howled down," Casey said, his voice still strained. "People will believe what they want to believe, as always; and they desperately want this to be true."

"The evidence will pile up against it," the stranger went on. "When these physicists, doctors, and so on, who questioned Frederick 10A434K, are checked upon it will be found that most of them, years ago, have written or spoken for world government. Some of them—this Doctor Williams,

for one—stood for government by technicians, scientists and engineers as far back as the '30s."

"But all these tremendous scientific discoveries that Frederick 10A434K revealed to the world," I said.

"A lot of nonsense," the stranger snorted. "These men *claimed* he'd revealed some startling matters to them, but that most of what he'd revealed was supposedly so far advanced that only our scientific friends could understand it. Of course, they really did release some true discoveries, but these weren't brought out of the future. They were developed by this clique themselves in present-day laboratories. They merely withheld announcement of their discoveries until they were ready for their attempt to hoodwink all Terra into adopting their governmental theories."

I could see Jack Fleming had the same inner sickness I had. He ran a hand wearily down the side of his face. "Yeah," he said finally, "it sounds awfully clear now. We were all in too much a hurry to believe in something that promised an end of war and a world government with security and abundance for everybody."

Larry Casey got down from his stool, his face expressionless but ashen, and walked slowly toward the door. I got up and started after him, a rage building up within me.

"Let him go," the stranger said. "You don't really need him. You have a lot of work to do, a lot of checking, before you can break this story."

FLEMING grated suddenly, "Why didn't you keep your trap shut? It was worth trying; it might've worked. Now, when we break the story in the papers, it'll fall apart and we'll be in the same spot we were in before, threatened with atomic wars, with..."

The stranger shook his head. "No. They didn't have the solution. Summed up, their plans amounted to a dictatorship of technicians over the rest of the population. A benevolent dictatorship, perhaps, but a dictatorship."

"It might've worked," Fleming repeated stubbornly.

"Again, no. The trouble with benevolent dictatorships is that it's up to the dictators to decide what is benevolent. Dictatorships are bad no matter who does the dictating; the principle is wrong. You have an excellent opportunity to make a wonderful world of this planet, but no dictatorship—no matter what variety—is going to do the job for you. You must figure out your answers yourselves—not count on somebody else to do your thinking for you."

I started for the door. "Come on Jack," I said to Fleming, "we've got enough checking to do to keep us busy till morning and beyond. Let's go."

Suddenly something clicked in my head and I whirled to face the stranger. "Just where do you come in?" I snapped. "How come you know all about this?"

He came to his feet and bowed, half mockingly. For the first time I noticed that his eyes flashed bright green, even in the dim light of Sam's Bar.

"Permit me," he said. "I am Daren Burl, of the Department of Supervision of the Continuum, of United Terra. You see, friends, we of the future cannot afford to have the past er...loused up, to use a present day colloquialism. And now I must go. I am needed elsewhere." His smile flashed across his face again. "Or, perhaps, I should say else*time*."

He strolled off through the door and into the night while Jack Fleming, Sam the bartender, and I stood watching after him. My eyes crossed with Jack's. This part of the story we'd have to leave out.

★

Special Article
by Tom Clareson

THE EVOLUTION OF SCIENCE FICTION

1. Literary Origins

ONE DAY last fall, after a class discussion, one of my freshmen came to me and said, "I know who this guy Hitler was, but who the heck was Goering?"

My reaction can be imagined.

But such forgetfulness is not confined to the realm of college freshmen and the facts of recent history. It is perhaps the major reason for so much of the disagreement in recent discussions of the origins and evolution of science-fiction as a popular literary form.

We have remembered and idolized a few names—Poe, Verne, Wells, Haggard—but we have forgotten the indebtedness of these men to their contemporaries and predecessors. We have forgotten that these men did not so much create new literary forms as they did contribute the most artistic and enduring examples of forms already immensely popular during their periods.

It is this forgetfulness that causes the adoration of a few as "original geniuses"; it is this forgetfulness that causes the existence of so many "fathers" of science-fiction, ranging from Lucian and Philostratus, through Swift and Voltaire, to Gernsback and Campbell—depending entirely upon the individual reader's preference for certain narrative-techniques, and for certain themes and plots within the larger scope of the genre.

Because so much of the discussion of science-fiction during the past few years has been largely upon the basis of individual subjective taste—those preferences already mentioned—there has been difficulty even in attempting to establish an adequate generally accepted definition of the genre.

These difficulties arise from several facts. (1) Enthusiasts have too often abstracted science-fiction from the field of general literature and so have attempted to analyze and define it in a vacuum, despite the fact that nothing has full meaning unless it is shown in relationship to other things. (2) Enthusiasts have too often considered the science-fiction of the past only in terms of their preferences for certain types of present-day stories; thus they have dismissed the majority of earlier works because such fiction did not reflect the problems, the scientific facts and theories, and the "pet topics for discussion" of 1953. This latter applies particularly to those stories

based upon scientific theories which have been supplanted by the researches and discoveries of more recent periods.

Perhaps the best example of the latter is afforded by those stories—such as Steward Edward White's "The Mystery" (1906) and William Wallace Cook's "Adrift in the Unknown" (1904-05) and "The Eighth Wonder" (1906-07)—in which the scientific basis for the plot is the search for and discovery of, or the utilization of, some "ultimate energy"—usually derived from some unknown power of magnetism, electricity, or radium. Such are "pooh-poohed" because they have been antedated by the knowledge held in 1953—just as some of the most popular stories of 1953 will draw chuckles and dismissal, because they have been antedated by the knowledge held in 2003.

To commit either of these errors creates difficulty in the study of the origins and evolution of science-fiction.

MOST SIMPLY, perhaps, science-fiction can be defined as the *newest* form within the broad scope of fantasy. The literature of any historical period contains an element of fantasy, however, so this distinction alone does not provide an adequate definition. Science-fiction, then, must be regarded as that type of fantasy which draws its materials from the impact of the mechanistic (and their related and derivative) sciences upon the imagination of man. That is not to say science-fiction is a mere recording of formulae and data; that it has never been. Rather, it is the attempt to interpret and speculate upon the effects of scientific theory and fact on man, as an individual and a species. As such, one of its primary methods is the extrapolation of known scientific fact along a possible/probable line of development, in order to make use of (to prophesy) future conditions and problems.

Again, however, the presentation of a list of future "gadgets" is not a story, but rather the study of the effect of those "gadgets". As each field of science has developed, and provided material provocative to imaginary speculation, science-fiction authors have made use of it. For science-fiction has always been extremely topical, drawing many of its themes and plots from immediately-contemporary theories and events.

If this definition is allowed, then modern science-fiction is a product of the nineteenth century, *not* the twentieth.

If this definition is allowed, then science-fiction has gone through four general stages during its evolution as a popular literary form. (1) The pre-nineteenth century, when certain literary forms were created that were to provide basic narrative-techniques to later writers. (2) The early nineteenth century, during the Romantic Revival, when more and more authors made use of scientific and pseudo-scientific materials. (3) The late nineteenth century and early twentieth (in general, that period between Darwin and Einstein), when authors turned their attention first to those sciences which concerned the nature of man and the earth—geology, psychology, biology, archeology—and then to physics and chemistry, as those sciences "caught-up".

In doing this, authors created themes and patterns which formed the largest portion of science-fiction as late as the 1930's and, perhaps, the early 1940's. (4) The contemporary period, when more and more authors have based their stories upon a sociological or anthropological approach to some condition or problem brought about by scientific development, now or in the future.

The beginnings of the first period reach far back into medieval and classical literature. As noted, the literature of any period contains an element

of fantasy; but from period to period, from century to century, the content and narrative-techniques of fantasy are modified—because the ideas and aspects of human life which most appeal to the authors' imaginations change. The fantasy of any period directly reflects the thought and imagination of the period.

FOR EXAMPLE, during those many centuries when western civilization believed without serious question that man and the universe were the special creations of a Deity, who had the power of direct intervention into the affairs of men, a large part of the fantasy was concerned with religious and moral themes. Early examples may include the miracle and morality plays of fourteenth and fifteenth century England, such as "Everyman" and "The Castle of Perseverance", and the later prose-allegory of man's journey through life, Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress". The principal theme of this religiously-inspired fantasy, however, was the Christianized version of the Classical theme of Nemesis—the theme of divine retribution. It, more than anything else, created the traditional ghost story, for the spectre appeared as a manifestation of the Deity's intervention into human affairs. As such, the ghost's function in the story was to reveal a past crime, set in motion the revenge of a past crime, or, on some occasions, to punish the sinner directly. The most common variation of this device was the substitution of an incarnate Satan, as in the often-told Faust legend, for the ghost.

Not until the nineteenth century did this pattern change. Not until the supernatural had been severely questioned—not until the then-new field of psychology had seized upon the popular imagination—did the ghost evolve from an actual physical entity into the hallucination of an unbalanced mind. Yet, even then, the hallucination often remained as a kind of instrument by which to fulfill the theme of Nemesis.

It must be noted that, from the beginning of this religiously-inspired fantasy, there was a treatment of pseudo-scientific materials such as astrology, alchemy, the "elixir of life", and metempsychosis. Although this material was included solely for the moral conclusions to be drawn, its presence in the literature must be regarded as one of the beginnings of science-fiction—for at that time, those fields were regarded as true sciences. And science-fiction deals with the scientific facts, theories, and speculations of its period.

Man, however, has always been as interested in the world around him as in his soul. Out of the Renaissance, out of that period during which "the imaginations of men were stirred by the sudden enlargement of their conceptions of the world,"(1) out of that impact of scientific thought upon western civilization—came a re-emphasis upon a literary form as old as Plato's "Timaios" and "Kritias", in which he mentions Atlantis, and the emergence of a new form, the Utopian romance, which was primarily a vehicle for social criticism. Throughout the history of man, as Willey Ley and Sprague deCamp have so ably illustrated,(2) the dream of a fabulous kingdom and/or continent—Atlantis, the kingdom of Prester John, *Terra australis incognita,* a western continent which many identified with America—has fascinated the imagination. The resultant literary form, existing as far back as Classical times, was the imaginary voyage. In combination with the Utopian dream of the possible perfection of the political state, and of natural men in some far-distant ideal kingdom, the imaginary voyage established a form that has lasted into the contemporary period.

It is from these two traditions that the writers of the nineteenth century found the literary forms from which

to create a new type of fantasy—science fiction.

2. THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

SUCH authorities as Groff Conklin and James Gunn have named the Industrial Revolution as perhaps the primary cause for the interest in science, which led to the emergence of a science-fiction. To do so is to simplify matters exceedingly. For it was not the gadgets of the industrial revolution that first claimed the attention of the authors. Rather, it was the implications and direct effects of new scientific discoveries, and of industrialization, upon the life of the individual man and upon the structure of society that first claimed attention.

At the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, man's concept of himself and of the universe was more seriously questioned than it had been since the time of Christ. For that was the period in which the furious battle between "Genesis" and "Geology" began—a battle which was to dominate a significant portion of nineteenth century thought.

During that period, Herschel advanced his nebular hypothesis; in 1812, Georg Cuvier's *Recherches sur les ossemens fossiles* was to question existent ideas of physiology and was to be his most important work in establishing the then new science of comparative anatomy;(3) by 1820, William Smith almost single-handedly established the descriptive methodology of modern paleontology;(4) and between 1830-1833 Sir Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* was to establish the basis upon which modern geology has built. These lines of research were to culminate in Robert Chambers' *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (1844), which advanced the theory of evolution upon an abstract level, so that all Darwin did in 1859 was to provide a methodology by which evolution might take place.(5)

The impact of this chain of thought upon man as an individual—and society as a whole—was equal to, if not greater than, the impact of Einstein's theory of relativity; it questioned man's place in "the order of things" at a time when he thought he had nicely-provided for that problem. Man's role as a divinely-appointed governor of the world; his right to immortality and an existence in a Utopian heaven; the very theodicy by which he justified the co-existence of "good and evil" and thus arrived at his concepts of morality—all of these were questioned. The result was that man had to search for some new authority to justify his existence. In that search, as the nineteenth century progressed, he turned to the field which had made his old position untenable—science. And it was as a result of this search that he used scientific material in his literature, more and more, until he had created a science fiction.

THE BEGINNINGS are to be found in the Gothic novels and in the subsequent short stories published by such magazines as *Blackwoods;* in them, one finds not only scientific and pseudo-scientific plot-material, but, increasingly, an almost scientific point of view—objective, analytical—in the presentation of physical and emotional sensation, reaction. Especially in this "tone" found in the short story.

The short story form came into existence when authors found that "it was possible to compress into five pages as much sensation as was contained in five volumes of a Gothic romance."(6) As Mantague Summers has pointed out, the use of Gothic material originated in the desire of the

authors to provide romantic, vivid backgrounds for their stories. At first the "Gothic" was so much paraphernalia decorating a sentimental love story.(7) However, under the influence of German writers—and of the Englishman, Monk Lewis—the "Gothic" became somewhat more integrated into novels which had evolved into studies of the conflict between good and evil within a hero who felt himself an outcast, who felt himself an individual isolated in a life that had no meaning. Ernest J. Lovell, Jr. has called this type of hero (or hero-villain) the standard figure in Gothic romance.(8)

In a recent article, James Gunn has remarked that

> "the 'Gothic' romance of the eighteenth century had even less to contribute to the movement which culminated in modern science-fiction; their mysterious events were presented almost always without explanation and were included entirely for their own sake." (9)

On the other hand, the established critic-scholar, Dorothy Scarborough, writing in 1917, stated:

> "There is much of interest in the study of the relationship of science to the literature of supernaturalism in the various periods, and the discoveries of modern times as furnishing plot materials. The Gothic contribution to this form was significant." (10)

Significant, although, as she later adds, dealing primarily with alchemy and astrology. It must be remembered, too, that both Gunn and Scarborough speak fundamentally of the English Gothic, *not* the American.

A further contradiction in regard to the English Gothic is given by Edith Birkhead, who attributes to Mrs. Radcliffe's novels—which were among the most popular of the type, and did much to establish patterns in Gothic fiction—"coldly reasonable methods for accounting for what apparently was supernatural."(11)

Moreover, the major American author to contribute to the Gothic genre —Charles Brockden Brown—"rarely dealt with the spiritual side of the supernatural and it is really only in his treatment of the abnormal that he approaches the subject."(12)

In his first novel "Wieland" (1798) Brown recounts the story of a religious fanatic who has auditory hallucinations, and who kills his family as a result of hearing these supposedly divine-given instructions—such is the explanation Brown gives. In "Arthur Mervyn" (1799-1800) there is a serious study (with emphasis on civic responsibility) of the problem of yellow fever, which Brown had witnessed in epidemic proportion in Philadelphia(13)—and the objectively scientific manner in which he records much of his observation is highly reminiscent of Defoe's "Journal of a Plague Year".

HOWEVER, the one novel produced by the Gothic movement which may most truly be called science-fiction was Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" (1818). To dismiss it as the first of a series of stories dealing with a mad scientist is to base one's interpretation upon the movie, *not* upon the novel—as a highly-regarded professor of English literature recently and frankly admitted he had done.

On the one level, "Frankenstein" is a variation of the traditional theme of Nemesis. Dr. Frankenstein, in creating the monster, perpetrates a sin against the established order of the universe, by taking unto himself powers not meant for man. In turn, divine retribution is meted out when the monster kills Frankenstein's wife, and causes the doctor's death. On a second level, however, the novel is Mrs. Shelley's protest against the narrowness of society and its unwillingness to accept anything, or anyone, who differs from the hypothetical norm. The monster, terrible in his ugliness but benevolent in his nature, is rejected by society because of that ugliness, and

thus becomes an outcast doomed to wander alone (recall the standard pattern for the Gothic hero). His loneliness drives him to revenge against Dr. Frankenstein. He kills the doctor's wife. This, in turn, causes the doctor to pursue him in an attempt to destroy him. They wander into the Arctic wastelands where both perish. Thus, by means of a sensational plot, Mrs. Shelley disguises her protest against society.

This adaptation of pseudo-scientific material to old themes was continued by Nathaniel Hawthorne. Throughout his works—particularly in the fragmentary novels he left at his death—one finds a concern for the elixir of life, for alchemy, for the spectral. Much that he used disguised a moral allegory, and rather thinly, at that. For example, in the short story, "The Birthmark," he presents a scientist whose wife's beauty is marred only by a blemish on her cheek. Aylmer operates in an attempt to remove the blemish. The ending is obvious: he kills that which he loves; perfection is not for man.

Meanwhile the major trend in the short story form had been toward the well-known "tale of terror". This type approached a scientific objectivity in the thoroughness of its presentation of a mass of details which were intended to invoke a feeling of terror in the reader. The stock formula for these stories—a formula created by the authors of *Blackwoods* magazine around 1820, *not* by Edgar Allen Poe—was to place the central figure in a horrific situation, and then minutely record his emotions and physical sensations as the situation built to a climax. Poe—who was by no means original, but who borrowed from every source available—perhaps achieved the greatest artistic success with this formula. It was his aim, and the aim of his contemporaries, to seek "untiringly for unusual situations, inordinately gloomy or terrible, and make of them the starting point for excursions into abnormal psychology."(14) To such an extent was this quest carried out that one experience of being buried alive was recounted by a man who had been interred for several days.(15)

The most original precursor of true science-fiction was FitzJames O'Brien. Although his output was slight, few authors have left such an indelible influence upon later fantasy. He created several of the motifs which have remained popular, even into the contemporary period. "The Wondersmith"—possibly his most horrible story—deals with animated toy dolls, which are instructed to kill; "The Lost Room" is concerned with the "transmigration in time-space" device and introduces a "doorway in space"; "The Spider's Eye" is concerned with a man who discovers that, in a certain position in a theatre, he can hear the thoughts of everyone present, and contains a lengthy discussion of the nature of sound and similar phenomena; "The Diamond Lens", although attributed to a madman, makes the first fictional use of the microscope, and introduces the concept of sub-microscopic universes; and "What Was It?" is the progenitor of those many stories which are concerned with invisible natural phenomena. Because of these contributions, FitzJames O'Brien, more than any other single writer of the early nineteenth century, seems to merit recognition as the first science-fictionist.

3. BETWEEN DARWIN AND EINSTEIN

SCIENCE FICTION did not emerge as a separate, identifiable genre until the latter decades of the nineteenth century. At that time, periodicals such as the *Atlantic Monthly, Munsey's*, and the *Cosmopolitan*, regularly con-

tained scientific articles by such men as Louis Agassiz and Thomas Huxley, as well as feature departments—such as *Cosmopolitan's* "The Progress of Science". Proof that science was making a tremendous impact on the popular imagination may be found in the simple fact that an ever-increasing number of articles and stories were based upon scientific material.

The fields of science that were of most influence, and produced a type of science-fantasy almost uniquely peculiar to the period from 1850 to 1920, were geology and archeology. The literary forms were the "lost race" and "lost world" stories; they were the modernization of the traditional "imaginary voyage", and often—particularly in the "lost race" story—contained Utopian material.

The interest in these two themes may be accounted for in several ways. (1) That which is far removed from the turmoil and/or routine of everyday existence is both romanticized and idealized. It was a simple matter for the popular imagination to idealize the prehistoric past, and the ancient civilizations which archeologists were bringing to light during the 1870's and 1880's. Moreover, since the "known" world had yielded such wonders, and since so much of the earth was as yet unexplored at that date, was it not possible that "in some valley of Borneo"(16) a fragment of this splendid past still survived? In other words, one could escape from the humdrum of his existence into the glorified version of the past, or into some exotic haven beyond the frontiers of civilization. There "a man was a man" and not simply a nondescript automaton cared for by machines, as Stewart Edward White pictures him in "The Sign at Six" (1912). Parallel symbolism may be found in the nineteenth century adoration of Daniel Boone and Buffalo Bill, both of whom were representative of a way of life even then vanishing into the past. (2) The old dream of a fabulous empire or continent, where man led a Utopian existence, had been dimmed by the realization that life in the previously idealized western continent (America) was much the same, facing the same problems of existence that man had always faced. This "American dream" had long been held to by the people of western Europe.(17) Thus, when it was no longer possible to make of America a Utopia, that Utopia had to be re-located beyond the frontiers of civilization. (3) Such a "lost race" or "lost world" provided, as a result of their popularization, a topical point from which authors could analyze and/or criticize the flaws in nineteenth century civilization.

It is to be noted that one of the strongest traditions regarding these stories—beginning, at the latest, with Poe's "A Gordon Pym" and lasting through DeMille's "Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder" and Frank Cowan's "Revi-Lona"—was the location of these "lost worlds" and "lost races" at the south pole, the last area of the earth to be explored. In this one can see the old dreams concerning *Terra australis incognita.*

THE MAPPING of the last corners of the earth erased that slim margin of plausibility that made the "lost race" and "lost world" so popular. When exploration proved to the authors and readers that there was no "earthly paradise", the authors turned to two themes which have been of primary importance in the field of science-fiction to the present day. First, they turned outward to the other planets; second, they placed their Utopia in the earth's prehistoric past or in the future. In a recent conversation, Sprague deCamp has agreed that it was this increased concern for a "romantic" past—coupled with the archeological discoveries of the period—that caused, at least in part, the sudden re-emphasis of the Atlantis legend

between the 1880's and the early twentieth century.

This early outward turning toward the planets established patterns which, though I may be on dangerous grounds to say it, dominated an entire branch of science-fiction through the first four decades of the twentieth century, and created many of the stock formulas for what has become "space opera". What were these formulas? (1) The author was primarily concerned with the physical exploration of the planets, where the hero found sufficient obstacles to make up a book-length plot, and where the hero found, as in such novels as Astor's "A Journey in Other Worlds" (1894), a parallel geological evolution to that of the earth, as Herbert Spencer's theories implied. (2) Man and/or the earth were threatened by total destruction at the hands of some alien invader who needed earth's resources or took a fancy to her climate. (3) As in Percy Greg's "Across the Zodiac" (1880) or Edward Bellamy's short story, "The Blindman's World" (1898), man encountered a civilization more mature than his own, and thus provided the author with a point of departure from which he might criticize man as a species, and civilization as it existed toward the end of the century. In this manner, the author continued the tradition established by the Utopian romance and the "imaginary voyage". Indeed, beginning with the earlier stories of voyages to the moon—which were, for the most part, critical in tone—the journey to another planet was the last possible development in the evolution of the imaginary voyage, and did not assume a *primary* importance until after the frontiers of the earth had been erased by exploration.

At the end of the century, however, the most popular form of science-fiction arose out of the Utopian romance, and might be termed a literature of social protest. For the most part, it idealized the future, showing not only the material advances made by civilization but also the social reforms. Its principal theme was the revolt of the laboring classes, of the common man, against the priveleged classes—particularly against the monopolists. Again this was a theme reflecting contemporary concern. During this period, Marxian doctrine gained perhaps its most favorable worldwide reception; during this period, too, the United States government was "trust-busting", which action culminated in the Sherman Anti-Trust laws.

These "historical romances of the future", as J. O. Bailey refers to them, (18) were most popular between 1895 and 1914. Indeed, so many of them appeared in so short a time that the otherwise-negligible writer, William Wallace Cook, in his "A Round Trip to the Year Two Thousand" (the favorite "period" for these romances), has produced a memorable satire of them in his portrait of a "colony" of writers from the year 1900 stranded in the year 2000. Of this colony, a citizen of 2000 remarks:

> "So many novelists have been coming from nineteen hundred to write us up that it is a positive pleasure to meet one who has no aims in that direction." (19)

And one of the colonists explains:

> "We're the great and growing order of the Nineteen Hundreders, Rainbow Chasers, Knights of the Double-X Dope, and so on." (20)

The "oath" binding the eighteen (of a total of twenty) colonists who wish to write books is a simple one:

> "He (the author) must swear to keep away from the facts. —These times are a cultivated taste. It has taken a hundred years to educate the people up to them, so how can we expect readers of our day and age to have any sympathy with such institutions? We must suppress the hard facts, gentlemen, and tint our theories with the rosy hues of imagination." (21)

But such satire is rare, for the theme of social reform was taken seriously at the turn of the century. It had its place in the "realistic" fiction of the day, as well as in the fantasy. But the portrait of the revolt of the common man against the industrial "bosses" and monopolists was particularly suited to fantasy. Bellamy, England, Wells, London, and countless of their lesser contemporaries made use of it. Among them, they reduced the problem of the perfection of natural man and the socio-political state of almost mathematical simplicity. Science plus socialism equals Utopia. And that formula stayed with western liberals through the 1930's.

A SECONDARY theme that affected these romances of future society was that of the final war. It grew out of the increasing alarm over the armaments race. Many of them were written, as was Cleveland Moffett's "Conquest of America" (1916), "to give an idea of what might happen to America, being defenseless as at present, if she should be attacked..." (22) More commonly, however, for a longer period of time—ranging from Frank Stockton's "The Great War Syndicate" (1889) through Roy Norton's "The Vanishing Fleets" (1908) —the principal theme was the scientific development of a weapon so terrible, or so effective, that it automatically ended the possibility of future war. The most frequent resolution after such an invention, beginning with "The Great War Syndicate", was the formation of an alliance between Britain and the United States—with, occasionally, Germany as a third member; this alliance ruled the world peacefully, if somewhat imperialistically.

One is tempted to linger over these prophecies of the future, which so many deify as the beginnings of science-fiction. In light of the subsequent historical and scientific development, the anachronisms are amusing. Most provocative of them all, perhaps, is that in Astor's "A Journey in Other Worlds", where, in the inevitable year 2000, Astor sees man simultaneously straightening the axis of the earth so the world may have a perpetual springtime, and constructing wider avenues for the convenience of the horse and carriage.

Out of this period came, as well as the formula for Utopia and ultimate peace, a concept of the scientist as a kind of God-hero who would lead mankind to that Utopia. If the stock hero of the Gothic romance was that man who (because, in part, of the impact of scientific thought upon the eighteenth century theodicy) was lost and confused in a meaningless life, then the standard hero at the end of the century was that scientist who believed and strove to achieve the formula; science plus socialism equals Utopia. See the hero of Stockton's "Great Stone of Sardis", of England's "The Golden Blight", of Norton's "The Vanishing Fleets", and of William Wallace Cook's pulp thrillers. Variation of detail there is, but the pattern holds. It was as though man, deprived of his supernatural Deity, had to turn to the scientist and worship him.

The most significant by-product of this deification was the creation of the scientist-detective, who ranged in stature from Lynde's "Scientific Sprague" (1912) to Arthur B. Reeve's Craig Kennedy, who was created in the stories and novels published in the *Cosmopolitan* between 1910-1918. Indeed, the variation was to outlast the parent, for the scientist as detective-hero survived as late as Doc Savage and Lamont Cranston, the Shadow.

But if the physical sciences produced a quantity of science-fiction during the late nineteenth century, they were hard-pressed by the impact of psychology upon fantasy. Now psychology has become so much a part of

fiction—particularly in its influence upon narrative-techniques and characterization—that it is scarcely thought of as a producer of science-fiction. Yet, beginning with the work of Mesmer and his contemporaries at the beginning of the century, and continuing through the work of such men as Charcot upon the *idee fixee* and the repressed reminiscence to the work of Janet, Jung, and Freud all of whom were influenced by Charcot and his group), (23) psychology was of tremendous impact upon the nineteenth century. By the end of the century it made of man an isolated individual who could not be certain he knew himself, who could not be certain he communicated with others. In this sense it re-defined and continued the hero of the Gothic novels.

AS PSYCHOLOGY developed its data and terminology, that material was used in fiction. As early as Thomas Bailey Aldrich's "Queen of Sheba" (1877) schizophrenia is used as a basis for a love story, as it is as late as Gelett Burgess' "The White Cat" (1907). The concept of racial memory became a popular device for transporting one's heroes through time; but it was of particular importance to Jack London, in his "When the World Was Young", "Before Adam", and "The Star Rover".

The first major effect of the influence of psychology was upon the traditional ghost story. By mid-century, Joseph Sheridan LeFanu substituted a study of obsession for the ghost in "Green Tea". Psychology's increased influence may be seen by an analysis of the ghost stories of Henry James, for they divide themselves easily into three groups: those in which the ghost is a physical entity (the earliest stories published); those, such as "The Turn of the Screw", in which there is an element of ambiguity—because the ghost can be interpreted either as an actuality or a psychological phenomenon; and those in which the "apparition" is the result of an unbalanced mind.

The evolution of the ghost story into a form of science-fiction was most ably completed, however, by the much-romanticized but generally-neglected Ambrose Bierce, to whom the Arham House group acknowledge their indebtedness. (24) In his "Devil's Dictionary", Bierce defines a ghost as "the outward manifestation of an inward fear." (25) Throughout his best stories—such as "The Death of Halpin Fraser" and "The Moonlit Road" —he dramatizes that fear by means of a narrative-technique that more closely resembles that of Hemingway than it does that of Bierce's contemporaries. More important, in four stories, (26) he has his characters attempt an analysis of their emotion and, in so doing, lay its cause to an inherent fear of darkness, and of the unknown, which has been a part of man from the time of his earliest ancestors—the cavemen. He thus makes use of the theory of racial memory, then so popular. If this is not sufficient to make of Bierce a science-fictionist, there is always the remarkable "The Damned Thing", in which the cause of that inward terror is an invisible being whose color is of that part of the spectrum which man's eye cannot perceive.

The greatest influence of nineteenth century psychological research was not upon the ghost story, but in the creation of a form which is almost entirely unique to the period 1870-1925. That is, the concern for the field of psychical research.

Of this Dorothy Scarborough writes, in 1917:

> "I have devoted more attention to the fiction of the supernatural in the last thirty years or so, because there has been much more of it in that time than before. There is now more interest in the occult, more literature produced dealing with psychical power than ever before in our history." (27)

In view of the date, one explanation may undoubtedly be found in the emotional impact of World War 1 upon the public in that, like Conan Doyle, who became interested in psychical study, the individuals could not reconcile themselves to the loss of persons close to them. Another explanation might be found in the fact that as the sciences more and more questioned the existence of the supernatural, man strove desperately to find some means by which he might retain his dream of immortality. Certainly it is in the stories dealing with psychical research that one finds much of the fictional works of the mystics and theosophists of the period.

Of the field of science fiction at the close of World War I, Miss Scarborough writes:

> "The application of modern science to supernaturalism, or of supernaturalism to modern science, is one of the distinctive features of recent literature. —Now each advance in science has had its reflection in supernatural fiction and each phase of research contributes plot material." (28)

THERE REMAINS, then, one significant question only. Why is so much of this earlier science-fiction dismissed as romantic and naive, and thus ignored by present-day readers? The answer most satisfactory lies in the relationship of that science-fiction to the general literature of the period, for much of the literature of that period is almost unreadable today. The cause may best be found in the fact that turn-of-the-century fiction mirrored the criteria of the so-called "Genteel school". Its theories were dominated by the belief that there was much of life which should not be included in fiction; there should be nothing in any story that would bring a blush to maiden's cheek. In addition to this selection of plot-material, the authors romanticized and idealized their heroes and heroines in the extreme. The characters were done in blacks and whites; they were "goodies" and "baddies" and that was the way the authors got their "dramatic conflict" —just as certain detective-story fantasy writers do at present. Most important was the fact that while psychology had begun to provide materials for plot-action, it had not yet—generally speaking—begun to provide material for character motivation. The maiden might blush. It was, then, the naivete of the popular writers in establishing the motivations of their characters that caused the major weakness of these stories. One example may suffice. Astor, in "A Journey in Other Worlds", explains his hero's motive for a trip to Jupiter in the following manner:

> "You see, his fiancee is not yet a senior, being in the class of 2001 at Vassar, and so cannot marry him for a year. Not till next June will this sweet girl-graduate come forth with her mortar-board and sheepskin to enlighten the world and make him happy. That is, I suspect, one reason why he proposed this trip." (29)

4. THE CONTEMPORARY PERIOD

THUS, between Darwin and Einstein, formulas were created which endured and formed the "backbone" of science-fiction at least until the late 1930's, if not the early 1940's. There arose the "Buck Rogers" type of "space opera"—which —with its first cousins, the "Dangerous Invention" and the "Wonders of the Earth"—dominated a large portion of the pulp magazines and relied, with only slight variation, on the old plots: the exploration of some unknown planet; the invasion of earth by aliens; the "cosmic horror" that threatened the destruction of man and the solar system.

Much has been said and written of how the pulp magazines nurtured science-fiction from the 1920's until its recent "coming of age". But seldom has it been asked why science-fiction was relegated to the pulps after its period of prominence at the turn of the century; seldom has it been asked why so many of the hard-cover books published between 1920 and, say, 1945 received so little attention, generally speaking—although their number did not decrease from the number at the turn of the century. Was it the devotion of so many authors to "space opera" and the "gadget"? One wonders if, in part at least, the explanation may not be found in the answer the little boy gave when asked if he liked the book about rabbits. "Frankly," said the little boy, "he told me more about rabbits than I care to know."

During the period of approximately 1915 to 1940 a large part of the provocative material in science-fiction came from the impact of two areas of speculation upon the modern imagination; namely, the theory of relativity and the growing concern for the nature of time. The latter might be named a particular obsession of the contemporary period, one which may be traced back perhaps as far as Peirce and William James, who advanced many of the theories basic to the "Pragmatic" school of philosophy. (30) Out of this impact came such themes as alternate universes, time-travel, and additional dimensions. The classics these themes have produced are innumerable. During this period, too, two other themes became for the first time of *primary* importance; namely, "what would have happened *if*", which has continued to produce excellent stories as recent as Ward Moore's "Bring the Jubilee", and the speculation—which can be traced back to the arguments of 18th century philosophers—that all of the universe is but an illusion, a dream, a figment of something's imagination. Among others this theme has produced Robert Heinlein's "They".

YET EVEN when these provocative themes were used, many of the stories continued to be dominated by plot. It was as though the authors believed that the only way to obtain a dramatic conflict was to rely on lots of action and the subsequent struggle between "goodies" and "baddies"; it was as though the authors had not heard that major novelists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had shown that to study the workings of a man's mind—to show the conflicts *within* a character—produced a dramatic effect more intense, more interesting to the reader than did a reliance solely upon complicated plot-action, which led so often to superficial melodrama.

As Groff Conklin has pointed out, not until the late 1930's, when John W. Campbell influenced the editorial policy of *Astounding Science Fiction*, did this situation change. (31) One afternoon in the summer of 1946 (an incident which he may have forgotten) Campbell listened patiently to the outline of a story—not yet written—and suggested, when it was over, that the key situation be approached from a psychological or sociological point of view. That is to say; given the situation, what were its effects upon the characters and/or upon society as a whole?

In that question lies the key to recent science-fiction, to that science-fiction which has caused so many enthusiasts to exclaim that at last the genre had matured, had come of age. Within the past ten or fifteen years the focus has shifted from plot to character. It is as simple a matter as that.

In other words, the writers of science-fiction have discovered—as did the writers of "realistic" fiction earli-

er—that a character's reaction to a situation makes as powerful a story as does the situation itself. For example; in the genre, heroes have been traveling to the planets and stars for a long time; but how many of those stories which relied primarily upon that plot will be remembered as long as Robert Heinlein's "Universe"? Again, the science-fiction hero has long encountered aliens, and often has the earth been invaded. But except for those few such as Wells' "War of the Worlds", which now may be primarily of historical importance, how many will be remembered as long as Murray Leinster's "First Contact?"

In addition, during the recent period authors have discovered that sociological and anthropological studies of the effects of science and scientific theories upon society provide dramatic material. No longer is the delineation of the adventures, and misadventures, of a God-hero exploring the universe the only material for a story. As interesting is the study of the problems which any number of intelligent, yet completely dissimilar, species of intelligent beings will have in living together and governing the galaxy. Nor do authors have to go to such a length of light-years; there is always today and tomorrow and 1984 to study.

THESE "TRENDS" in science-fiction have led to the most recent deification of a science-fiction author —Ray Bradbury. He has been exclaimed over, and fought over, perhaps more than any other single writer. One neophyte reader said of him, "Oh yes, he's the one that writes about children who suffer." That he is a consummate literary artist, although limited perhaps to work within a certain few moods—*as all artists are, to some degree, because of the consistency of their philosophy and artistic point of view*—certainly no one can deny. To dismiss him as a writer who does not write "real science-fiction" is to ignore the basic definition of the genre: that form of fantasy which records the impact of science upon man as an individual and as a species. On the other hand, to deify him in this period of *apologiae pro vita scientificus*—when so many scientists are writing books in which they exclaim, "the dirty politicians made me do it," "science really does not answer all, there *is* something," "all I wanted to do was a little research"—to deify him in such a period as the first author who has suggested that science will lead man down a blind alley and make an automaton of him is equally unrealistic. There have been "anti-science" writers as long as there has been science. And certainly Dr. Keller's "Revolt of the Pedestrians" (1928) and Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World" (1932) did not suggest that Science plus Socialism equals Utopia.

For example, in a pure science-fiction story there is the following passage:

> "As a city dweller he (man) was becoming a mollusk, a creature that could not exist without its shell. The city transported him, warmed him, fed him, amused him, protected him. He had nothing to do with it in any way; he didn't even know how it was done. Deprived of his push-buttons, he was as helpless as a baby. Beyond the little stint he did in his office or his store, he was no good. He not only didn't know how to do things, but he was rapidly losing, through disuse, the power to learn how to do things. The modern city dweller, bred, born, brought up on this island (Manhattan), is about as helpless and useless a man as you can find on the broad expanse of the globe." (32)

The passage was not written by Huxley or Bradbury; rather, it was a speech of the hero of Stewart Edward White's "The Sign at Six" (1912).

What, then, is the future of science-fiction? That is one "prophecy" that only time can make. One fact alone is certain. If the genre is to flourish, it must be remembered that science fiction is a literary movement. It is *not*

SCIENCE-fiction; it is science-FICTION. Its place and form as a genre of twentieth-century literature cannot be denied. It cannot be a catalogue of, or a listing of the details of, "gadgets". On the other hand, it must be remembered that science-fiction is perhaps the literary form best suited to analyze and interpret the world of 1953, as well as entertain with its speculations about the world of 2153.

In the recent "Literary History of the United States", Dr. Robert E. Spiller, professor of American literature at the University of Pennsylvania, made the following statement:

> "Before science could produce original art, it had to become an instrument of the imagination rather than merely a method for the discovery and analysis of fact." (33)

There can be little doubt that that "original art" is science fiction. But it must be well written and it must say something if it is to flourish.

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Halt the Blue Star's Rising

by Milt Lesser

(Illustrated by Milton Luros)

All Grayson knew was that the ritual had always failed to stop the coming of the terrible Blue Star. But could one man halt the terrible faith in a meaningless rite? And, even if he did, could there be any hope of safety from the terrible star?

GRAYSON followed the exec, although he knew he shouldn't. He followed him out of the clearing where the huts were, beyond the crag upon which the great bulk of the *Centauri* stood, all the way to the Cave of the Ritual. In spite of himself, Grayson trembled with fear of the unknown.

Like his father before him, and like

his grandfather who still lived in the clearing, Grayson was a crewman. The Ritual was not for him; he could talk about it, and he could hope that the Ritual would work this time—but he could not observe. To observe, if you were a crewman, was to destroy efficacy. It was a taboo and a sin and it was punishable by death.

But this time Grayson *had* to watch. Everyone called old Grandfather Grayson crazy and no one listened to him—except Grayson. The old man was the only member of the original dwellers in the *Centauri* still alive, and he spoke to Grayson about a world beyond the stars. Perhaps this was the raving of a madman—everyone said so; the officers and the exec ordained that no one was to listen to old Grandfather Grayson, the ancient crewman who had lost his mind in the last coming of the Blue Star.

Now Grayson paused at the entrance to the Cave of the Ritual. Dimly from inside he could hear chanting—the Ritual had begun. These, however, were only the crudest of preliminaries; the actual Ritual must await the arrival of the exec.

Sean O'Casey was the grandson of the original exec, now dead with all the other original dwellers except Grandfather Grayson; and Sean strode into the darkness of the Cave of the Ritual. Grayson felt his heart beating too fast—his ribs and his chest were restricting it, it would burst forth. He wanted to run back to the clearing and hide, and then no one would know he had followed the exec. Then he could call old Grandfather Grayson crazy like everyone else did, and everyone would like him.

But he had been a boy in the last coming of the Blue Star, and his mother had died with almost half the people in the horrible, broiling heat. And he had promised that next time he would try to save the exec and the officers and the crewmen—although he himself was only a crewman and should do only what he was told to do. He had promised his mother, and now his mother was dead.

Next time was now; for several days he had seen the hazy glow of blue in the golden sunlight. He wanted to run, but he would not let his father and old Grandfather Grayson down. He took a deep breath and plunged within the cave.

At first it was so dark that he could not see, but soon his eyes became accustomed to the dim light and up ahead he could see the glow of a fire. He heard the chanting louder now, and then, abruptly, it stopped. He thought they had seen him, but it was dark where he was and light where they were, and he knew that was impossible. Of course, it was said that the exec had strange and undreamed of powers—but this Grayson did not believe. They had stopped the chanting because the exec arrived, and now they could start the ritual.

Grayson crept close, hidden by the long shadows of those who danced in the ritual. He could see the dim shapes of the tiny black flying things which inhabited the cave, and he could hear them brushing against the wall as they flew. Something scurried by his feet there in the semi-darkness, driven out of the cave by the fire, and Grayson's breath caught in his throat.

Sean O'Casey was a mighty figure by firelight. Grayson was tall, but Sean was as tall as he was, and much broader. The fire made Sean's red hair seem redder, cast moving red shadows across Sean's face, played up a thousand highlights on the sweat of Sean's body. Enthralled, Grayson watched.

SEAN'S VOICE sounded like part of the fire—roaring and ebbing and rising in the semi-dusk.

"See!" cried Sean. "I take my brand." He lifted a big dried stick he had been carrying.

"He takes his brand!" the officers chanted.

Grayson knew it was a sacred brand. It grew on a sacred tree halfway between the clearing and the crag upon which the *Centauri* stood, and no one could touch that tree except the exec and his wife.

"I hold my brand on high," Sean roared. "And through the roof of the cave the Blue Star will see it!"

Grayson did not know how a star could see, let alone through the cave's roof.

"Through the roof of the cave!" chanted the women officers.

"The Blue Star will see it!" cried their husbands.

Sean jumped up and down with his brand, and the officers imitated him, leaping with their brands held high over their heads. Grandfather Grayson, who had once seen the ritual in secret, had told Grayson it was silly. And now Grayson felt a wild urge to laugh, and he cupped a hand over his mouth and almost choked. But how could one laugh at his officers and his exec?

"The Blue Star has seen it!" roared Sean.

"It has seen!" the women chanted.

"Watch, O Blue Star," wailed their husbands.

Sean danced close to the fire and swooped down with his brand. "See, O Blue Star, I light my brand by the sacred fire which burns always."

"By the always burning sacred fire he lights his brand."

"Everyone will light his brand," Sean chanted.

The score of brands dipped into the flames, came away glowing like Sean's.

"Our brands are lighted by the always burning sacred fire."

Weird shadows rose and fell as the officers danced with their brands. The men lined up on one side and the women lined up near the opposite wall.

The men chanted: "We will kill each other with the fire so you will not have to come, O Blue Star."

"Why," the women sang, "should you have to come if we kill ourselves?"

The men and women ran at each other with their brands and played at killing. Then Sean said: "The Blue Star is just."

"It is just!" echoed the women.

"We shall burn our homes for the Blue Star," Sean declared.

"We shall burn our homes and save the Blue Star trouble. It can slumber," chanted the men.

Sang their wives: "See, O Blue Star? We will burn our homes and you can sleep. We are just as you are just—we do your job for you..."

Their brands on high, the officers followed Sean, running now, toward the mouth of the cave. Their quick movement caught Grayson by surprise. He plunged ahead of them, but he knew they would see him silhouetted against the light. He ran and ahead he could see the warm golden sunlight and the faint, ominous glow of blue.

Behind him, a woman's voice: "Someone has seen us!"

"Someone has seen the Ritual!"

Sean cried: "If he lives, the Ritual will have no efficacy."

"Then he must die."

"He must die!"

Grayson ran, trembling, to the rocks. He scrambled up among them, close by the huge bulk of the *Centauri*. He knew they could not see him now, and below, he watched the flaming brands fan out, searching for him. Time was on his side, for the officers must return to the clearing before their brands burned out. But if they found him now...

HE HEARD a voice, a shrill voice, a woman's voice: "You! Crewman! I see you—halt!"

She had seen him, and she stood on the rocks below him, but she had not seen his face. She stood on the rocks, holding her brand in one hand, and the

other hand she balled into a fist and shook at Grayson.

"Come down."

"If I come down, you would kill me."

"Come down so we may return to the clearing and burn the houses or the Blue Star will come."

"The Blue Star will rise anyway, so why should I come down?"

She muttered something and called to the other officers, then she began to climb the rocks after Grayson. But she had to carry the brand, and he could move more swiftly. Soon he lost her among the rocks, and he sat there in the shadows of the *Centauri,* watching, while they ran by below him. Soon he heard Sean's angry voice: "We will have to return. The brands burn low and if we do not get to the clearing soon—"

"But he has seen the Ritual, and if he lives the Ritual will be as nothing."

Sean shouted, "It is either that, or we don't burn the houses at all."

And Grayson saw the flaming brands disappear down among the rocks toward the clearing. With his forearm he wiped the sweat off his brow, and then, slowly, he made his way down among the rocks and toward the clearing, going by a different path, a longer path, and leaving the silent bulk of the *Centauri* behind him.

Everyone was huddled at one side of the clearing, watching the crude houses burn. Grayson joined the crowd from behind, and all of them were sweating and dirty like him, from carting their belongings out of the huts. Grayson looked among the tired faces for his grandfather, but he could not find him.

He prodded a shoulder, and the woman turned. It was the officer who had seen him among the rocks, but she had not seen his face, and she did not recognize him.

"Where is Grandfather Grayson?" he said.

"Why do you ask me, crewman? He is not of my house, so why should I know where he is?"

Grayson shrugged and asked someone else. The man said he did not know, and then Grayson was shouting. "Has anyone seen Grandfather Grayson?"

There were mutterings, but no one knew. Some people made coarse jokes about the queer old man, but no one could tell Grayson where he was.

"Maybe," someone jested, "he decided to stay in the fire. Haw, haw, haw—maybe he decided to stay in the fire."

Grayson grabbed him by the arm and spun him around. "That's not funny. He's a cripple, and if no one helped him out of the house..."

GRAYSON pushed the man hard, and he fell back among his fellows, cursing. Then Grayson was running among the huts, holding one arm close to his face against the harsh light of the flames. He began to cough and his eyes were watering so that he could not see more than an arm's length in front of him. But he reached their hut, and he cried: "Grandfather! Grandfather!"

He waited. The voice was feeble, but he heard it. "John, boy? Eh, John, is that you?"

Grayson found the little old man on the floor near the doorway, where he had dragged his crippled old frame until he could move no further. The fire was licking hungrily at his feet.

Grayson dragged him out and then carried him beyond the clearing, away from the crowd which waited on the other side. He placed him down tenderly.

"Grandfather—"

A gnarled old hand reached out weakly and patted Grayson's shoulder. "You have seen—the Ritual?"

"I have seen. Grandfather, I will get you water." Grayson stood up.

"No, you won't. I haven't time, boy—I want to talk." The eyes were

watery, the face was etched with pain. "Sit down."

Grandfather Grayson was dying, and Grayson sat down, feeling weak and ashamed. If he had not gone to watch the Ritual, he would have saved his grandfather...

"I know what you are thinking, John. Don't. The Ritual was more important. If I lived another year, or two—so what? Life is for the young, for you. You can save our people—" He coughed, and blood flecked the thin lips, welled out from between them and streamed out on the gray shirt.

Grayson waited, saying nothing.

"What do you think of the Ritual? A lot of hogwash, eh lad?"

Grayson did not know what hogwash was. Grandfather was the last of the original dwellers, and sometimes he used old words. But in this instance Grayson could tell the meaning quite clearly. He nodded. "Hogwash," he repeated awkwardly.

"Sixty years ago," Grandfather Grayson said, "the *Centauri* made a forced landing on this planet. Damage was minor: it could have been repaired almost at once. But—"

"But the Blue Star!" Grayson finished for him.

"Yes, lad. The Blue Star. It was hot, terribly hot. One man stayed to repair the damage. The rest of us fled to a cave where we tried to live. Almost everyone died, because we had no time to store up food against the coming of the heat, and we starved.

"I don't know what there was besides the heat in that Blue Star, but those who lived were—not the same."

"How do you mean?"

"Amnesia, for one thing. Forgetfulness. Everyone but me. I was sick and I had fever; and for a long time your grandmother thought I would die—but I got well. No one else did—not really well. It was some form of cosmic radiation, I don't know what. Cosmic rays, who knows? We're near the vortex, lad—right near the center of the galaxy. The hub of a universe, and who can say what emanations might be encountered?"

THE OLD man paused, and shook his head. "But I didn't get it. And with each coming of the Blue Star, I became less sick. Now it doesn't touch me at all, except the heat. Over the years, the rest of them, and their children, and their children's children, your generation, John—have built up an immunity to the rays. Not the heat, but to the other emanations.

"But they became a primitive people. In little more than half a century, they became primitive. And because they know no other way to stop the Blue Star, they resort to magic. Of course, it doesn't work. But now the Ritual is part of our people—and you could not tell them that. So they destroy the village every five years, when the Blue Star comes—trying to halt the Cepheid. They can't, obviously."

"Cepheid? What's that?"

"This is a double-star system, lad. Two stars, not one, and one of them is a Cepheid—a long period variable. Every five years it flares up and you see it—that's the blue star. The remainder of the time, that golden sun is in the sky, and it keeps you alive.

"Long and long ago, my fever left me a cripple. No one would listen to me, and I could do nothing myself. Your father matured and tried to follow my instructions, but they were a savage people and a hidebound people. They killed him."

Grayson nodded. He had never known his father. His mother had died later and he had been raised by his grandfather. "What sort of instructions, Grandfather?"

"Science. We must use science, not magic."

"You mean, with science we can stop the Blue Star?"

Grandfather Grayson laughed, and the effort was a painful one. "No, lad.

We haven't the science to stop the Blue Star. There isn't that much man-made science in the entire galaxy."

"What then?"

"It's so incredibly simple that if anyone from outside heard about it, he would think everyone here is insane. We have only to get into the *Centauri* and blast off from this planet—return to earth. There is your science—mankind's most magnificent invention—the starship. Waiting for us."

"I thought you said it was broken."

"It was. But sixty years ago, the one man who remained with the *Centauri* repaired it. He was the captain and he was unmarried, which is why the Executive Officer is in charge now. The captain repaired his ship, but he died in the broiling heat, trying to find the rest of us.

"The ship has stood where it is ever since, and that damn chief magician—"

"Who?"

"The exec—Sean O'Casey I, Sean O'Casey II, and Sean O'Casey III—won't let anyone get near it. Lord knows why, but in this warped place, it's a taboo. It's ready and waiting to blast off, but no one will go near it. Crazy as it sounds, no one will go near it."

Grayson knew it was not crazy—the law said that no man could approach the *Centauri,* let alone enter it, and no one did. Even Grayson had grown to be afraid of it.

"O'Casey was a wonderful man," Grandfather Grayson continued. "But the Blue Star touched him as it did the others—and he changed. For science he substituted magic, and it's been that way ever since."

A great coughing spell wracked the old man's body, and Grayson ran off and returned with a jug of water. He wet the old man's lips and then he gave him a little to drink, and Grandfather Grayson's eyes flicked open.

"I'm fading, lad. No, don't get up—I'm old and I'm weak and in another few minutes I'll be dead."

He said it like that. Just like that. Grayson felt the tears brimming in his eyes, but he kept them back.

"I don't know how you can force everyone into the *Centauri.* You're just a crewman and you have no authority. I've waited until now, until you became an adult, a full adult—because I knew we'd have but one chance, and I wanted it to work. The people must leave here, John, and you must take them..."

Grayson felt frightened. Grandfather was dying, and he loved the old man. And now it would be up to him. Everything—he knew so little about it—would be up to him.

"What can I do? How could I pilot the *Centauri?*"

Grandfather Grayson gagged on some blood, then he propped himself up on his elbows, weakly. "I've taught you how to read, lad. With the few books I took from the *Centauri* those sixty years ago, I taught you how to read. You must go into the ship and find the books on astrogation, and you must teach yourself. Piloting is largely automatic, anyway. You have to start and you have to stop, but the ship is to some extent a self-functioning mechanism."

Grayson nodded, giving the old man more water.

"That's—it, John. No more to tell you. You must make everyone join you in the *Centauri,* I don't know how..."

"Grandfather—"

"Say hello to earth for me, John..."

The elbows caved in. The old head slumped back. Grandfather Grayson, who had been out among the stars with the original dwellers on the *Centauri,* was dead. He could not help Grayson anymore. He told him all he could, and Grayson wondered if it would be enough.

It had to be. The old man was dead.

GRAYSON let the bitterness wash away in the days which followed. Everyone was busy rebuilding the burned-out village, and no one paid any attention to him—no one noticed that he built no new hut. If he could do what Grandfather Grayson had instructed him to do, there would be no need for a new hut.

If his people hadn't been so wrapped up in their magic, Grandfather Grayson would still be alive. For that, Grayson was bitter, but he could forgive them. He had to forgive them. There was a lot he did not understand, but Grandfather Grayson's last words had cleared away much of the veil of mystery, and Grayson knew he must clear the rest of it away himself.

He spent his days in the *Centauri*, in the silent hulk of the waiting starship, and at first he had been afraid. Everyone feared the ship—and it was possible, just possible, that Grandfather Grayson *had* been crazy, as everyone said. If that were so, Grayson played with death. It was a risk, but when he thought of it, he was angry with himself. In spite of the old man's precautions, Grayson to some extent had been indoctrinated by the magic and superstition of his people.

The *Centauri* was an incredible new world for him, and he spent days just wandering about inside the great metal ship, learning not to fear what he had been taught to fear all his life. And then he had found the library, and his work began in earnest. He read the books on astrogation, and then he read them again. Then he studied them, and he memorized whole sections of each of the books, and soon he brought them forward with him to the control room and he studied the controls with reference to what he read. It was a slow job and a tedious job. Grayson had to teach himself something which, in sixty years, had become foreign to his culture.

It took time, and the day which finally saw him leave the gleaming *Centauri* behind him was a blue day. Finally, the transition had been made—and literally, it was a blue day. The golden sun still shone in the sky—but the new blue sun was brighter, a baleful eye glaring down at Grayson.

The heat was just beginning. It was hot now, but not yet unbearable. Another two days, perhaps three—and the people would flee to the caves. It was an old story, one which Grayson knew: the air would be too close, there would not be enough food, and most of what they had would spoil in the heat; the water would become tepid and many of them would contract the dreaded fever. It was the same all the time, and Grandfather Grayson had told him that the original dwellers were five-hundred in number. There were seventy five crewmen and officers now.

Grayson reached the clearing, where the new huts had been built on the ashes of the old. A knot of people was gathered angrily about Sean O'Casey, and Grayson joined them.

"You said, Sean, that the Ritual would stop the Blue Star for sure this time. Look up, Sean, look up. There is the Blue Star." The woman who spoke was the one who had almost caught Grayson that day in the hills, and now she pointed up into the sky.

"I know," Sean said wearily. "But the Ritual would have worked. You saw for yourself that it would have worked, Marla. Only someone watched. A crewman, because all the officers were there. That is not permitted. It is against the Ritual. It tainted the Ritual. The Ritual lost its efficacy. That certainly is not my fault."

Grayson knew that Sean O'Casey was not intentionally evil. This, however, was worse; Sean believed what he said. It was all wrong, but Sean believed it. And, believing it, he tried to force that belief on his people. It worked. It had worked for the three Sean O'Caseys for sixty years, and although the people were angry now be-

cause the Ritual had failed—they were always angry when the Ritual failed—they would still obey Sean in the future. And years later, when the Blue Star returned, there would be the Ritual again.

GRAYSON cleared his throat. He did not know how to go about this. All his life, he had kept pretty much grandfather's tutelage, and everyone to himself. He had been under his thought his grandfather was crazy—so Grayson too had been given a wide berth.

Now he said, "Even if someone had not spied upon the Ritual, it would not have worked."

There was a silence. Everyone turned to look at him. They saw his clothing, and the woman Marla said: "It is a crewman."

Sean O'Casey nodded. "It is the grandson of old crazy man Grayson, who died in the last burning."

"He was not crazy," Grayson said.

"Anyone who believed as he did was bound to be crazy," Sean told him. "Isn't that so?"

"I don't know about that. And, if you accepted that, by your own admission, you would also be crazy. The Ritual never works, yet you insist it does. Maybe it is you who are crazy."

Now the silence was painful to Grayson's ears. Then the angry mutterings followed, and Grayson saw Sean O'Casey's face redden.

Sean said, "He is just an ignorant crewman, and we can forgive him—especially since his grandfather was crazy. We will forget he said it."

Marla nodded, and so did the others. "That's the best way."

"No, it isn't," Grayson said. This was not going the way he wanted it to go at all. "The Ritual is pointless. We burn the houses and then we hide in the cave, half of us perishing each time the Blue Star comes. Then we live in our new houses, waiting for the Star again. It is stupid."

Sean snorted. "How can a crewman know if the Ritual is stupid? You may think it is, but you should not. You are wrong. Or you are crazy like your grandfather."

Grayson tried to control himself, but he could not. He felt the blood pounding in his temples. This smug, complacent exec had been responsible for his grandfather's death, and now he stood there, calling Grayson crazy.

Grayson laughed hollowly. "You line up on each side of the cave, the women officers and the men, staging a mock fight for the Blue Star. You tell me who is crazy—"

It was out before he realized it. He had not meant to say that, but now he had said it and it was too late.

"Say that again," Marla commanded him.

"He doesn't have to," Sean told her.

Grayson remained silent, shifting from one foot to the other.

"He doesn't have to say it," Sean repeated. "Now we know who it was that watched us that day in the cave of the fire. It was Grayson. Grayson is the crewman who destroyed the efficacy of the Ritual."

"Grayson..." someone said, and again, "Grayson."

Sean said, "If we were to kill him, perhaps there still would be time. We cannot stop the Blue Star's rising," he pointed into the sky. "The Star is already here; but if we kill Grayson, perhaps the Star will set that much sooner."

Marla reached out and grabbed Grayson's arm. Her hand was strong, strong as a man's, and she held him. "Right here?" she demnded.

Sean shook his head. "No. Not here. At the cave of fire. Outside the cave. We will have everyone watch, and maybe the Blue Star will be gone."

From the fringe of the crowd, someone threw a stone, and it hit Grayson's shoulder, staggering him. He would have fallen, but Sean took his other

arm and held him up. Then he said: "Stop it. We must not hurt Grayson here. He must be sacrificed properly..."

They led Grayson away. Once, when he was a child, he had seen a man sacrificed. The man had violated a taboo—he had gone too close to the *Centauri,* and they took him near the cave of fire and they made everyone watch, and then they burned him.

The whole village came behind them now, as they led Grayson to the cave of fire.

THE OFFICERS, men and women, stood around Grayson in a circle. Beyond them, the crewmen watched, looking at Grayson and the officers sometimes, and looking up at the Blue Star. Grayson could feel the heat now, growing stronger by the moment, and they stripped him naked, except for his breeches. The hot winds came and burned his body and fanned the flames of the officer's brands. Grayson's mouth felt very dry.

Sean's brand was still unlit. He ran within the cave and soon he returned, the brand glowing. "See, O Blue Star, I light my brand by the sacred fire," he said.

"By the sacred fire he lights his brand!" the officers chanted.

"If we burned this man by the flame of the sacred fire because he watched what he should not have watched—"

"He should not have watched it," the women chanted.

"—would you not burn so fiercely, O Blue Star?"

A cloud scurried across the face of the bright blue star, obscuring it for a moment.

"See!" Marla roared. "See? The Blue Star listens. It will go away when we destroy Grayson."

Sean danced around with his brand. "Tie him," he said.

Marla approached with a coil of rope, dropping the first loop over Grayson's shoulders. He felt lethargic. He had tried, but there was nothing he could do now. He was powerless and they would kill him. The Blue Star would burn as furiously as ever, and half of them would die. Soon—in another generation perhaps, none of them would be left. And looking up to the crag, Grayson could see the *Centauri,* waiting. He could pilot it, he was sure of that. But he would die—and soon all of them would perish because they had substituted magic for science.

Magic and science—and a third thing. What else was there, friend of science, foe of the magician's tricks? There was—strength, physical strength! Grayson knew he did not stand a chance against all of them, but he also knew, suddenly, that he would not die without a struggle. Grandfather Grayson would have wanted that.

Grayson pulled the coil of rope from around his shoulders and threw it. It caught Sean across the face, and it was a heavy rope, and Sean tottered and fell. He scrambled quickly to his feet, and he was shouting for them to kill Grayson *now,* without the fire, but Grayson wasn't there to kill. He had struck Marla across the face with his fist and she had fallen back among the other officers. Grayson did not want to hit a woman, but there was no other way.

Then he leaped up and he was running. He heard the footfalls pounding behind him, but he did not turn to watch. He darted up to the rocks and soon he had reached the *Centauri.* Panting, he opened the lock and stepped within. Once he started it, the ship was pretty much automatic: he could get away by himself. It would serve them right. He could return to earth and they would stay here and die, as they had wanted him to die. But Grandfather Grayson had said...

Outside, they waited. Through the port, he could see them, as close as

they would dare come to the *Centauri*, waiting for him to come out.

HE OPENED the weapon closet with fingers that trembled, and took out one of the big, heavy hand-blasters. He had read about it in the library and he knew how to operate it, and now, clutching it in his right hand, he opened the lock.

Everyone stepped back as he came outside. They stared at the blaster, uncomprehending.

"Inside," Grayson ordered. "All of you get inside or I will kill you."

No one moved. Sean O'Casey stepped forward, confidently. "Give yourself up, Grayson. Come on, now."

"Get inside," Grayson said. "You first, Sean."

Sean laughed and took another step forward.

Grayson knew there was only one thing he could do. Overhead, the Blue Star burned fiercely down on them, and too many lives hung in the balance. Once more, he said: "Get inside, Sean."

When Sean laughed and came forward, Grayson squeezed the trigger of his blaster. There was a loud noise, not unlike thunder, and Sean clutched a jagged hole in his chest. He fell back and he was dead before he hit the ground, and everyone looked at him stupidly.

"Inside now," Grayson said again. "All of you. Come forward one at a time and go inside. Nothing will hurt you in there. I have been in and I know. If you don't go inside, I will kill you."

They were all frightened now, but Grayson knew they were no more frightened than he was. Marla screamed: "I don't know how he did it, but it was a trick. Kill him, kill him!"

She ran toward Grayson, still screaming. He did not want to kill anymore. But he was tired and he could not fight with the woman now, and he knew that she would cause trouble later. With the lives of all these people at stake, he could not take that chance.

He squeezed the trigger again, and Marla looked surprised. She folded in the middle and she slumped to the ground, the surprised look still on her face. "Grayson—" she said. And then she was dead.

One by one, looking about fearfully, the people entered the lock of the *Centauri*.

The controls were on automatic now, as they would be for most of the trip. Grayson stood at the port and watched the great blue star, only a pinpoint of light among a hundred thousand others, fading out of view. It would be a long trip back to earth, to earth which was home for all the people, and with Sean dead and Marla dead he knew he could explain to them what they had to know.

They were locked in a big room arearships, and right now Grayson was in no hurry. There was plenty of food and water and the book on astrogation said the robot pilot was nearly perfect. Grayson needed some sleep.

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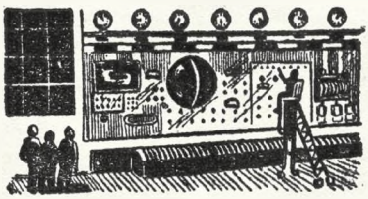

THE MELTING POT

A Discussion of the Science-Fiction Fan Press

by Calvin Thomas Beck

Some of you were kind enough to write in asking whether I'll run an additional column in either of Bob Lowndes' mags, or in some way appear more often. Since this matter isn't in my province, it might be more on your behalf to address such or other matters directly to Mr. Lowndes in the future. He's just as interested, if not more so, in learning of your opinions as I am.

I was amazed to discover during the last few months that I have been the recipient of a host of fanmags which have gone into more varieties of size, format or appearance than I ever imagined possible. One disconcerting note detected was the large number using a photo-offset process, which to me seems a general rut too many fan-editors are following. There's no question that each different title bears its own style and stamp of originality contents-wise. Although the fan-editor's enthusiasm to improve his work is undoubtedly appreciated by many, the same size of 8" X 6", used by photo-offset mags, is becoming more than tedious—not that size is all-important, however. Nothing is wrong with photo-offset reproduction when it gets its fair share of opprobrium, like any other method of duplication; but when I see nearly every decent fanmag trying to climb on the bandwagon with this process, there's an apparent lack of acumen resting somewhere.

It is naturally part of the fan-editor's pride and indication of interest in what he is doing when attempting to embellish the general layout of his publication. However, considering the expense to which he already goes on photo-offset costs (I think one thousand copies is the minimum average for *offset* mags), consulting a good reliable printer might not only shave the bill somewhat, but—more important—the pleasantness of over-all change in layout and appearance. Regarding fanmags as a whole, this would create an inestimable amount of approval from those subscribing to the printed one, and others of average caliber. Certainly fans and fan-editors themselves would be more than relieved in seeing the difference.

By this I don't mean to infer that everyone now using offset methods should quit right away; but assuredly I deplore seeing practically every good fanmag falling into a monotonous rut, just because photo-offset reproduction may look *purttier* than other methods.

About *mimeographed* mags, not much should be said. It is always a matter of budget, or the editor's own personal preference. I can safely say I have seen and read a good many whose neat appearance often belies some of the alleged semi-or fully professional periodicals in *print*, both literarily and qualitatively. The "Selected Essays of the Lovecraft Collectors Library", heading the reviews of this column, is quite specifically one of these examples.

Dittoing, *multigraphing*, and *hectographing* are other systems found in use. Perhaps there are a few more processes around. In any event, what has already been debated about *mimeographing* or *offsetting* is equally applicable to all other methods of duplication.

Meanwhile you may feel free to drop me a few lines, if you think you've got a few solutions on licking some of the fan-printing problems—or any other ideas barring those that require the fan-editor to drop dead.

●

SELECTED ESSAYS—*Volume One in the Lovecraft Collectors Library series. SSR Publications*, 119 *Ward Rd., North Tonawanda*, N. Y. 35c *a copy*. While I am not particularly fond of all of Lovecraft's

essays, some of his fiction, and most of his primitive writing-efforts, this will no doubt find a welcome reception with the old crop of readers who have dogged HPL's early or posthumous works, as well as the several harvests of devotees who came after his demise. As could have been perceived in the Arkham House collection, "Marginalia"—or, for that matter, in the majority of HPL's literary offerings—the reader shouldn't read him in two, three or even a dozen sittings. If he must be appreciated, taking a bit of HPL a little at a time would safeguard a scholar's—or reader's—love of reading science-fantasy fiction from swift death, as a result of HPL's pedantic and often flowery attempts in deluging the greater part of his works with *atmosphere*. Whether fiction or non-fiction, in most of HPL's efforts it is short of calamity for the reader to indulge in much of him. The author's anxiety in trying to put over his special diet of *intangible*, *indefinable*, and *indescribable horror*, has left me cold many a time when ever I tried to read more than two or three of his stories at a sitting... left me cold with boredom, that is.

In this venture of trying to resurrect HPL's embryonic prose, I fear the reader will find an even more flowery and verbose author in him. Nevertheless, I am quite sure it will prove indispensable, in context, to those who have hitherto sworn by Lovecraft's name. It is skillfully edited, attractive and professionally mimeographed. I further understand that the editors of SSR intend to issue much more of Lovecraft, as well as other pro' and fan writers, work in the future. By all means, this is far from the least serious and studious approach I've come across in fan-publications, and those sponsoring it must be commended for their sincere and ambitious presentations.

●

UTOPIAN - and - PROMAG PARADE—*Russell Banks, Jr.*; 111 *S. 15th St., Corsicana, Tex.* 25c *a copy*, 4/$1.00. *Quarterly.* And it seems as if the editor has high hopes, for he offers a 35-issue sub' at $5.00. I wouldn't advise such a high investment for any fanmag, but considering the fine value and quality represented so far, sending in at least a buck or two wouldn't be unwise. Among some of the issues, sent all at once in a large envelope, was Banks' *special* June, 1952, edition, limited to 300 copies. I understand a few of them are still in stock; and in view of the extraordinary quality of its contents, Banks may come to wish he printed a larger order—76 pages of David H. Keller, Bob Tucker, Manly Banister, Bob (pro'-turned-fan) Bloch, Ray Palmer, and others of high renown. A socko issue in fanmags for '52!— Other regular issues are also of fine standards, whose contents comprise informative analysis on SF books and current pro-mags in the field, some crossword puzzles, and original fan-fiction.

Promag Parade is Banks' supplement sent out between issues of his quarterly gazette. To be frank, I'm most pleased over the careful and sober reviews featured, which weigh and analyze current SF promags bouncing about. Aside of the readers, it should be of more than average interest to editors and writers contained in these reviews. Different writers are in charge of this pro-mag surgery and vivisection, and the end-result is some of the best reviewing devoted to SF mags to date. I doubt there's another publication so compactly-specialized or as orderly in this classification, therefore warmly applaud it for its genuine originality.

●

STF TRENDS—*Lynn Hickman*, 543 *High St., Napoleon, O.* 25c *a copy*, 10 *issues a year*/$1.00. The last two issues (previously entitled "Little Corpuscle", or whatever), received since my last review are superior by far in editing and arrangement. Lynn announces that "The Little Monsters of America" are *kaput*. Ten issues a year for merely $1.00 now makes this one of the best buys in fanmags. Each issue consists of chatty articles, editorials, cartoons, and letters from fans. This column wishes to doff its beany to the editor's elevation of the quality of his production.

●

SCIENCE FANTASY BULLETIN—*Harlan Ellison*, 12701 *Shaker Blvd.* (*apt.* #616), *Cleveland*, 20, *O.* 25c *sample copy*, 12/$2.25. *Monthly.* Harlan states that a year's subscription includes the "Annual" and a lot of other "extras" from his press. This mag has now been published nearly a year, and has shown up each month with surprising promptness. From its over-all aspect, and Harlan's keen appreciation of variety, I'd daresay that, in a sense, SFB is short of any of a number of pro-mags with national circulation. Surely there's no other fanmag going in so heavily for all sorts of articles, features, "citations", rebukes, and the dissemination of various topics. The Jan., 1953, issue is something of an eye-dropper, containing an article by H. L. Gold; an "advance editorial," which Horace will use in opening the first number of *Beyond;* an article by his Mrs.; lots of other dope on the Gold-mags, including cover art by Emsh. You ought to subscribe to the Ellisonigma for this issue alone. My only adjudication is that Harlan could do with a bit of taming down on superfluous adjectives and superlatives rampant in his *petit journal*. Otherwise this is one of the most entertaining fan emanations a reader could poke a finger through.

●

SPACE REVIEW—*Al Bender, P.O. Box 241, Bridgeport 2, Conn. 35c a copy, 4/$1.40. Quarterly. Official publication of the International Flying Saucer Bureau, available to members at half-price.* From cover to cover, one of the best classified publications available on flying saucers. Professionally printed, with authentic data on relevant phenomena from the four corners of the world, it should arouse a number of peoples interest who follow one of the biggest mysteries of the age. Hardly a year old, the IFSB is always on the lookout for information on all sides of its calling, and within its brief period of activity has been able to do much in this line. Their publication is recommended as tops for *sauceriana.*

●

FAN TO SEE—*Larry Touzinsky, 2911 Minnesota Ave., St. Louis 18, Mo. 10c a copy, 12/$1.00. Monthly.* I was sure this fanmag showed more than average "signs of promise", when first seeing its initial issue; and the one received since then bears me out, having picked up a few more grades on the way. Part of the contents in the Feb., 1953, edition show up dem ol' debbil *saucers* around again, in an article by Max Miller; a report "From Frisco" by Carr; and contributions by Doer Ellison, Paul Mittlebuscher, Touzinsky, and fanstuff by others. As another fanmag, this one stacks up well on all angles.

●

SLANT - and - HYPHEN—*Walt Willis, 170 Upper Newtownards Rd., Belfast, N. Ireland. 25c for SLANT, 25c/2 issues of HYPHEN.* Published more regularly now, with Willis home again, and slowly going back to normal after his importation into the U. S. A. Sorry to say it, but what was probably at one time, if not the best, one of the "top four" fan publications has gone down the grade in the last year or so. Humor, of course, is running amock; and Bob Bloch's, Arthur C. Clarke's, A. Bertram Chandler's, and contributions by other equal or lesser dignitaries lend significance, 'tis true. But more care should be given to the format's neatness, amount of variety and originality manifested in the material selected, rather than emphasis put on "names" alone. Honestly, I'd prefer reading something by Joe Doaks from Igloo, Alaska, if it's sincerely interesting, than just anything by an Einstein (why does everyone pick on Einstein?), or a spare crumb off the literary table of a Faulkner, Thurber, or an Al Capp. I only hope Walt soon discovers the trans-oceanic-continental ride is now over and settles down towards publishing the quality of material that made him the top fan-editor he once was.

●

[*Turn To Page* 124]

Dreadful Therapy

(continued from page 33)

him over a long period of time was the prime desire to carry out specific orders. He had been trained not to think as leaders like Darrel thought, but to carry out commands. Darrel or Ankhor stood in his way. His friend—Ankhor—

He threw the entire phial of catalystic fluid in Darrel's peculiarly-glaring eyes. The chemical began its rapid disentegrative work immediately. Darrel was screaming and falling, as Anson stumbled, blinded and dazed, about the room destroying all evidence of their work.

Then he found himself in the hall. He hesitated only a moment, then headed for the elevator that would take him to the rooflanding where he could rent a gyrocar. At a hidden station they had set up on the Hudson in a deep forest, was the equipment that would make the gyrocar resistant to the various electronic detection devises of the Military and the means to make the gyro partially invisible.

Anson moved with a fast yet dogged efficiency and purpose. He had but little time, he knew. Already Weym might have sent his recommendations to Home Base, and already the invasion-fleet might have been launched.

THE ROCKETS, now equipped with his 'cosmobomb' warheads, crouched on leveling legs in the valley of Albategnius. Greg sat looking at them framed in the periscopic screen. Dania stood by the great glass dome looking out across the lakes of frozen lava.

Her voice was a hushed sacrilege to the silence. "We're supreme rulers," she said. "How does it feel, George?"

Greg's gaunt body unlimbered itself. He got up, and when he walked over to her and placed a hand against her warm side and felt the vibrant pulse of her, he was awed at the transformation that occured in his mind, in his life, in the life of the world. "I don't know exactly what it's like," he said. "I was as surprised as you were at the fear and the subservience of the earth when they received our ultimatum."

He stood there beside her, both of them gazing out over the alien frigid cold and the sheen of the sun on the glassy lakes of lava. They had sent the radagram to all the five governmental powers. N'American Military, aware of the authenticity of Greg's threat, and its true capability, had been the first to back up his declaration of the 'cosmobomb's' unthinkable power.

They had teetered on a mental springboard of uncertainty for a brief breathless moment, then had agreed to any demands Greg might make. Already his rather simple plan had been started. Dismantling of all atomic power plants was first, and the destruction of all atomic power-facilities. The cessation of all scientific research in the fields of chemistry, physics, and allied fields.

Until the human swarms below him developed psychology to a point where they could sanely utilize these fields and their products, these sciences were in stasis.

There would be children, Greg hoped, and they would be trained to carry on the plan which he and Dania would develop thoroughly—a positive plan for the development of biology, psychology and subsequent sociology.

Time would bring either victory or total destruction. Meanwhile, there was

a breathing spell, and a time to think, and plan.

One man, one woman; and beneath them an entire world turned helplessly, waiting, wondering. Greg was showing no favoritism of any sort. To him now it was humanity, the world, a unanimity that must persist. He was free of the remote abstraction of 'nation' and 'state', those grisly shibboleths that had almost brought the final destruction to their worshipers.

"Dania," he said. "We've got to help each other. The position we've made for ourselves is a limitless, complex thing; we can't allow our positions to warp any objectivity. Paranoia is a constant threat to our attitude. A god-complex would be a natural development of a frail human being in such circumstance as ours; we've got to help each other retain our present insight until—"

WEYM HAD cut off all contact with the outside world. Within the confines of the *Vordel* he had tried to return to that sanity that he had maintained for so long and against overpowering odds.

He looked absently at the copy of the report he had sent to Home Base justifying his recommendation for abandoning peaceful therapy and the use of violence and invasion under the conditions of Plan-C.

"We thought we could solve the problem here by applying *reason* to it. We see now that such confidence was wholly unjustified. The sociological problem here cannot be solved even by the keenest reasoning. Reasoning can only work from secure premises; and the necessary premises to sociology—which are psychological—do not exist here. Nor do the premises to psychology, which are biological, exist here; biology is still only in the observational stage.

"Operating on a positivistic historical basis of successive scientific evolution, man has developed his sciences in the order of intrinsic obscurity—and not, as they have mostly assumed, in the order of their amenability of exploitation. Mathematics was their simplest science, wherefore easiest, wherefor it came first. Physics followed because it was the next in complexity. Chemistry came next, then biology—which, as stated, still remains in the observational stage because of its great complexity."

As Weym wearily reviewed that message to his superiors on Mars, he thought of that tape droning the philosophies of Le Corbeiller and Comte and Spencer. And he wondered how objectively he had evaluated those ideas, and how justified he had been in applying them in order to arrive at his dread decision.

There had been other theories concerning this great barrier to the uncovering of psychological science. One of them, by a man named Wylie, had another theory: that the branches of science had emerged in the order in which they had done least damage to man's illusions concerning himself. Mathematics first, because it didn't hurt human vanity at all. Physics next, because—although it diminished human illusions of terrestrial grandeur—it left "miraculous man" unimpaired. Biology is still only in an observational stage because it involves an examination of man as an 'animal'—when he insists on remaining a god. And psychology is aeons away, theoretically, because with its acceptance, a thousand prideful institutions would vanish, even sacred tenets of science would dissolve.

Weym stared at the black jungle steaming outside the *Vordel*.

It was too late, now, regardless of what reasons had blocked the development of psychology and biology.

Psychology would have developed *before* physics and chemistry, perhaps,

thought Weym—or even simultaneously and proportionately with it, as had been done on his world. But it hadn't, and now it is too late.

In the ancient Orient, psychology had evolved partly along with objective sciences such as astronomy and mathematics. But it had died, and had never been reborn.

Already a Martian invasion-fleet was enroute to Earth. He had given out a command for all fieldmen to return to the *Vordel* but none of them had ever appeared. They had been defeated by an alien, unpredictable, insane society.

Weym had done his duty as he saw it; but he had decided not to wait for the end. He didn't want to see it.

His head dropped down against the hard surface of the chair arm. Johrl's last report with its inevitable quote ran through his mind.

"Mecanomorphism, a universal ultimate—the mecanomorphic cosmology both of scientific, and mystical thinking—the Universe is just a machine grinding its way toward stagnation and death. Men are only insignificant parts of this machine running down to their own private death—"

He raised his appendage and looked with detached interest at the colorless catalystic liquid in the phial. It would have been inconceivable by those who had manufactured it or even those to whom it had been distributed, that it would ever be deliberately and almost joyfully self-inflected...

●

IN THE COOL shade made by towering stone and steel that had fallen into ruin, the cowled man lectured to rows of sychophants dressed in the skins of animals.

"The Black Days burst over the world," droned the cowled man, "and in its flaming ruins died the secrets of our past.

"But there were many songs. The most complete were those of Jelwohn the Singer, and the descendents of Jelwohn.

"You have learned many of the verses which were recorded on stone by the wandering Tribes of Shawn. And the most vivid and meaningful of these is that of the flaming chariots that came down from the Sun and partially destroyed the Earth. That song assures us that our Moon God defeated these mighty chariots of war and that the Moon God still reigns over all living things.

"Doubt this not.

"There was much myth and fanciful legend in these old songs. For in those days there was no writing, and knowledge was preserved by wandering minstrels who sang of the Black Days; of the great battle between the Sun Gods and the Moon God; and of the Laws of the Moon which must be observed until the Day of Enlightenment which is to come.

"Doubt not the benevolence and the wisdom and the eternal power of the Moon God, nor the importance of His laws. And do not harbor thoughts of unrest or of change, for His hand and His eye is with each of always. And no thought or wish we might have is not also His thought and wish, to punish, or to deny, or to praise.

"Doubt not if you would remain on the Sacred Path that will lead us to Salvation.

"Repeat after me the Laws of the Moon:

"The Mind is all!

THE MIND IS ALL.

"Reality is only a reflection of the mind. To understand reality one only need understand himself."

"Meditation and non-attachment are the ways to enlightenment."

"AUM! AUM! AUM!"

★

(continued from page 8)

in Newfoundland. The present article was originally presented as a speech at the PSFS Annual Conference of 1952.

L. SPRAGUE de CAMP has two kinds of enthusiastic readers—those who think the articles and reviews are excellent, but who don't care for the stories; and those who eat up his fiction, but wish he wouldn't write articles and reviews. Your editor is a member of the third group: those who like most of both.

Letters

WE READ all your letters, whether they're typed, hand-written, or chiseled into stone blocks—so long as we can decipher them at all. Every story-rating is counted, no matter how received—the preference coupon is for the convenience of those who want to vote, but haven't the time or inclination to write a letter.

There's but one plea from us: if you type your letter, *please type it double space, using only one side of the sheet.* And if you must slight part of this request, have mercy on us to the extent of using but one side of the paper; we can send off a single-space letter to the printers (although such are a bit difficult to prepare for them), but matter typed on both sides of the sheet won't be accepted. Now we do not mind typing up a hand-written letter, at times; we realize that every reader does not own, or have access to, a typewriter. However, it's awfully aggravating to have to *retype* a missive which came from your machine, perfectly legible otherwise!

S. T.

Dear Mr. Lowndes:

As is evident from my story-rating coupons, I don't care for my stories in bulletin, or as you called it, capsule form—unless the author has boiled down his story to bare essentials without omitting too much. In other words, my opinion is that a short-short should either involve much more work than a 100,000 word novel, or should be based on a very simple single incident, which requires only a few hundred words to relate. Just as greatly do I object to so-called novels which build up unnecessary wordage to fill space, or to cop a few more "two-or-more-centses" from the editor.

One of my favorite time-passing activities when I have read all the s-f magazines on the newsstands up to date is to go over the

stories—the "novels", seeing how often the author has blown three words into five, ten, twenty or more. You must know what I mean, because there is very little evidence of this blow-up in SFQ—which must mean that you either cut out the excess or have it cut out before you print the story.

However, there is, in my opinion, such a thing as too much cutting—which is why I didn't like "Four Commandments" last time and "She Called Me Frankie" this time. But, while I liked the content of FC, SCMF seems to me not worthwhile bothering with. Of course, as a first effort by the author, perhaps there are extenuating circumstances—but the theme has been so overworked during these past 25 years, since I read my first copy of Gernsback's *Amazing*, that to me it is just another effort and not such a good one at that.

Perhaps there is a preponderance of fan-club fans among your readers—people who are interested in "fan-zines", and who want story-space given over to them; but how will you know of the contrary opinion, if only those who want fan-zine news write in? So, I repeat what I said in my last letter—I mean my first one—that I consider it a crime to give valuable space, which could be devoted to the elaboration of such a story as "Four Commandments" —a future one—to the discussion of the merits of the various hangers-on of S-F, who feel they must publish something—whether or not they are of professional caliber.

I get a kick out of the book-reviews, chiefly because so few of the hard-cover books mentioned are new to me—I read them in the magazines long before—or else find them in the paper-back editions which come nowhere near the fabulous price of $1.75 on up. Usually, I merely glance at the titles and prices; but if the title is unfamiliar, all I have to do is read the review and discover that it is merely the same rose under another name—in other words, the name has been changed but the story untouched unless it has been blown up to book-size.

Your comment on my statement that one story in ten is good forces me to elaborate a bit. Sometimes one issue of a magazine is all good, sometimes all bad—for what my simple opinion is worth, of course. Often, there is an issue like your May SFQ: five nearly-excellent stories, and two poor ones. Usually, I finish the last story in the magazine—any one in the SF field —and think either that my 25c or 35c was thrown-out; or each story was worth the money alone; or "Goodness gracious!" that one story was worth more than the price of a dozen magazines. Some magazines always disappoint me; some sometimes, and some almost never. Each time I read an issue of the first category, I promise myself never to buy the following ones—then comes the time when it is the only one on the stand I haven't already read—and—

and I buy it, read and go through the whole process over again.

So, as I say so often, I'm much too far gone in my addiction to reading S-F to stop now—so let's see you keep up the good work of publishing stories interesting enough to make me fill out the little coupon and send it in.

As before, I do not wish my name and address published, if this letter sees print. Before, I simply asked that my name be withheld, but for the sake of identification, I'd prefer my initials signed to the letter.

Neither "The Four Commandments" nor "She Called Me Frankie" were cut in the process of editing—by which I mean there were no substantial deletions or alterations in the original. As a rule, I do not go in for this sort of thing, since (as I see it) this should be done by the author, not by the editor. Many minor changes in a manuscript will be made in "copy-editing", at times—and usually to the improvement of the story; often an author will compliment ye ed, in full sincerity, for such touching-up.

However, when the editorial hand bears down heavily, a number of unfortunate things are likely to result—even when ye ed is a skillfull practitioner of his art. (1) Alterations may look good to the editor, but an outside reader will note an apparent conflict of styles within a story, and blame the author for what looks like poor writing. (2) Sometimes the basic substance of a story can be polished right out of it; what looks like a slight miscalculation, or blunder, in writing—at first—may be marks of individuality well worth preserving in the over-all sense. (3) An issue will come out wherein all the stories look as if ye ed had rewritten them himself. (4) A story can still come out reasonably good on its face, but totally falsified, so far as the au-

thor's intentions were concerned by editorial renovation. Any writer will resent such operations, and justifiably so—after all, if his name is going to be signed to an offering, he wants to see *his* story in print beneath the name, not someone else's, good, bad, or indifferent.

My own personal feeling about alterations are simply this: I don't object to revising and extensive rewriting, to another editor's taste, so long as the story isn't falsified in the process. But I'll bypass a possible sale, refusing to change "just a few sentences" if so doing destroys the point of the story, in my estimation.

●

ROBERT COULSON

Dear RWL:

It's amazing! SFQ is printing good stories! Wha' hoppen? Tops in the May issue is "The Visitors". It is well-written and unusual. "Intermission Time", in second place, is top-flight space-opera. "The Mud Puppy" comes third. It is a "slick" type story, not usually found in the pulps. Not too much plot, but very good writing. "The World She Wanted" is fourth, chiefly because I read Sturgeon's "Ultimate Egotist" first. Dick is a good writer, but he can't compete with Sturgeon. "She Called Me Frankie" is unusual, but without too much else to recommend it. "Lifework", and "Time Goes To Now" are pure formula stories— Hack, in other words—and the latter contains an obvious error as well. When Henry killed the progenitor of the human race, he was out of the time-suit, and would have therefore vanished immediately—thus cutting out the last two pages of the story. Anyway, the average, over the issue as a whole, is surprisingly high. DeCamp's article was good. Madle had a good idea, but it seemed to me that he included a lot of unnecessary information.

I highly approve of your new cover design. For your next improvement, how about making it colorfast? I have red ink all over my hands at the moment. Keep the fanzine reviews; with Ziff-Davis and Standard both suspending their columns you'll have the field to yourself. Keep the book reviews; it is the first column that I read. What does Menicucci mean, "get well-known authors"? Offhand I'd say deCamp, Anderson, Merril, and Raymond Jones are as well-known as they come. I suppose he means Heinlein and Sturgeon.

I was a little startled to notice the picture you put over Willy Ley's name on page 122. He didn't look like that when I saw him.

—*Silver Lake, Indiana*

Hmm, you have a point there. Herr-Doktor Ley looks more distinguished daily, it seems; but I must admit I never saw him looking like that!

●

CAROL McKINNEY

Dear Bob:

You certainly slipped up *badly* when you entered that amazing and absolutely sensational novelet, "Lifework", in such an inconspicuous spot on the contents page! If only you'd made it the feature story instead of that mediocre, "The World She Wanted"! Stories like "Lifework" are so few and far between that when one does come along it should be played up big instead of hiding it and letting us make the pleasant discovery all by ourselves. Or was that your plan in the first place?

SFQ is going places now. So many new improvements! And one of the best is the new cover layout—a pic without words scrabbling all over it! Hope you keep it like that all the time.

"Intermission Time" and "She Called Me Frankie" were right in there pitching, too. Both were very good, each in its own class of novelet and short story.

"The Melting Pot" was ok—you can consider it an indispensable item in future ishs! Beck really does ok by the struggling and otherwise fanzines.

Letters:

1. Jay Tyler 2. "Mooney" Kessler 3. Wallace McKinley

I felt sorry for "Name Withheld" after reading his tale of woe. Why can't people like him consider that others somewhere, who enjoy reading stf as much as he does, would be very glad to get the very mags he so blithely tosses away—because they happen to live in small towns, or in foreign countries, where such mags just aren't available? (Ha! I know what I'm talking about because I'm such a person!)

Sprague de Camp's article, "The Golden Mirage", was very interesting and enlightening. Some of his articles are very good. The one on Poe was also interesting, but could have been less dryly written.

Your practice of telling us about the authors of the various stories each time is a good one. Keep it up!

All things considered, the May ish was by far the best one ever to come out. Now if the next one is that much better—

—385 *No. 8th East St., Provo, Utah*

"Lifework" seems to have received quite a bit of enthusiastic comment. You want to know why it wasn't fea-

tured, eh? Well, it came in after the cover was made up—and we wanted a story and story-title to fit the cover, anyway. I'll admit I could have held it for featuring in a later issue; but I must confess to a bit of prodigality: when a story like this comes in, I want to use it as early as possible, even if it entails a slight loss in advertising-value. My practice is to use the best I have at any given time, rather than to hold out for fullest exploitation.

Would you rather have seen another story, good, but not as good as "Life-work" in that spot? That was what the choice amounted to at the moment. Deadlines won't wait for genius.

●

CHARLES LEE RIDDLE

Dear Mr. Lowndes:

I'm writing to you regarding the fanzine reviews in SFQ. I put off writing to you after the last issue came out with my views on the subject, but after receiving the May issue, I'm not waiting this time.

As a fanzine editor for the past six years, I'm not against fanzine reviews, *as such*. However, I feel that in a quarterly magazine they serve no useful purpose; and the space devoted to the reviews—while possibly not a great amount—could be devoted to something else, such as more book reviews, or letter section. The reviews of a specific issue of a fanzine usually are way after the date the fanzine was published, and more than likely that issue has been exhausted. I know this from personal experience— I've made it a policy to hold back five or six extra copies of each issue, but more than once I've had to write the requestor and explain that I didn't have any more of that particular issue.

Furthermore, I've also found out that reviews don't bring in subscribers—which statement, however, does have one great exception—Rog Phillips. After a review of *Peon* by him, I've received as much as 60 (actual count) requests for a copy of *Peon* and have had about 25% of that amount subscribe after seeing a copy of *Peon*. Otherwise, I have found out that word-of-mouth, via fans, is the best method of obtaining new subscribers.

What I would like to see done in fanzine-reviews is not to review a whole host of 'zines, but to take one or two fanzines and give a critical analysis, preferably by a person who is removed from the "fan world". Your present reviewer, while probably capable in a limited sense, has been too much embroiled in fan politics to give a disinterested review; and I would suggest that you obtain the services of someone else. I have no personal grudge against Calvin— I've met him only once and have never corresponded with him to any great extent, so this is not anything personal against him.

—108 *Dunham Street, Norwich, Conn.*

●

PAUL MITTELBUSCHER

Dear Mr. Lowndes:

Naturally, I'm in favor of a fanzine Review column but *not* in SFQ. The reason is obvious.... Being a *quarterly*, it isn't issued often enough; and by the time the reviews are printed, few if any of the faneds have copies left of the particular issue publicized. It's bad enough with a Bi-Monthly mag. To illustrate: *Amazing Stories* for some time ran such a feature. Rog Phillips reviewed mags which were mimeographed in Sept., his reviews were written in Oct., and appeared 6 months later, in March of another year. I was never able to determine why magazines must be assembled so far ahead of schedule. But no matter, being in the business you probably understand such things. I would recommend that you switch the "Melting Pot" to *Future* and thus lessen this lapse of time between the zines publication and its time of review.

I strongly suspect that Calvin Thomas Beck has allowed personal feelings to enter into his reviews. Apparently, at some time or another he ran afoul of both Lynn Hickman and Bob Silverberg. He terms Hickman's *Corpuscle* as "awkward" and "haphazard". Altho this 'zine has been discontinued, there still remains the fact that it was not of the caliber which Beck describes it as being. Most laughable tho is his reference to Bob Silverberg's *SPACESHIP*. He regards Bob as a "fair" editor, the inference being that he is only *mediocre* as an editor. If there is *one* person in fandom today qualified to become a professional editor that person is *Silverberg*. In my own opinion, Silverberg will definitely attain this position if he strives for it; I know that if any publisher asked me to recommend a fan for the job of editing a SF mag I would unhesitatingly nominate Bob. (This was *not* a paid political announcement).

Comments on letters: Gilbert Menicucci states that "Fan mags reviews are so common; why every magazine has one". I'm sorry to disagree with you Gilbert but fan columns are *not* by any stretch of the imagination *common*; in fact there is only *one* other in the pro mags today. Out of a total of about 26 magazines only *one* prints any fan stuff. This misguided gentleman goes

on to say (referring to above subject) r "In *Amazing*, the same goes for *Fantastic Adventures*". FA at no time in its 18 year history printed fanzine reviews. *Amazing* has discontinued the practice. Carol McKinney and Lyle Kessler: I sympathize with you both. Especially you Lyle; the moronic attempt of newspaper men to ridicule science fiction is inexcusable. It seems that all reporters work with the theory that "cuteness", and poking fun at the general public, is the way to sell papers.

By far the best in the May issue was "Lifework" by Robert Abernathy. Just the type of story I like most; please try to get much more material from Abernathy. Worst (again this had no competition) was "Mud Puppy" by Bailey. One reason I never care for Ray Jones' stories is because I generally find myself disagreeing with his logic.

I admired your answer to my objections concerning Knight's book reviews—still feel that they are a waste of space. Only one reviewer among the countless in business is really competent. I'm speaking of P. Schuyler Miller. I will say that if I had to select a "next best" it would be Knight.

—*Sweet Springs, Missouri*

We've seen an objection to the fan magazine review section from a non-fan; here are a couple by fan-publishers; below, you'll see approval from another amateur publisher. My comments on the situation are at the head of this department.

●

TOM PIPER

Dear Robert:

Congratulations on the best SFQ issued yet! You and the publishers have really got an up-and-coming beauty here. You'll have less and less competition shortly; witnessing all the deaths of the old pulps (AS, FA, SS). But on to the comments:

Best story was "*Lifework*", my favorite sort of story. There have been very few stories of this type I've read, and I call this the best yarn *Science Fiction Quarterly* has ever run. I hope to see good reader reaction on this.

Calvin Thos. Beck's review column is quite a bit of judgment, considering only 1 other promag has fanzine reviews now. Might as well mention my fanzine, ***REASON***, here, in case of you-know-what. 10c per issue.

Thanks for a very fine issue.

—*464-19th Street, Santa Monica, California*

ROBERT R. WHEELER

Dear Mr. Lowndes:

Re your editorial concern about whether to print or not to print fanzine reviews, I would like to express my own views on the subject.

Fanzine reviews, as conducted in other magazines—such as *Amazing, Imagination, Startling Stories, Thrilling Wonder Stories*, have always served as an introduction of non-fans to the amateur publications. Some of these have become active fans and some have gone on to greater laurels as Editors of various professional magazines. (Pro-zines)

With the March 1953 issue, three of the above-mentioned magazines have discontinued the reviews of fanzines. The only review column that is currently being published is "Fandora's Box" in *Imagination*. Therefore, I believe that the field is open for any wide-awake editor to take the place of "The Frying Pan", and "The Club House". Your "Melting Pot" could be the new column to take their place.

Now for other things. My collection of S F includes all the issues of *Science Fiction Quarterly*. The quality of the magazine has steadily improved since the beginning. I look forward to reading each issue with pleasure. Incidently, any fans in my area wanting to start a club, get in touch with me. Maybe we can work out something.

—*65 Canal Street, Port Jervis, New York*

●

CALVIN THOMAS BECK

Dear Bob:

Begging to differ with reader Menicucci, whose letter appeared in the May SFQ: fan-magazine reviews are *not* "so common". Outside of the one I conduct for our revered quarterly, my only competitor—at the moment—is "Fandora's Box", in *Imagination*, a monthly mag. Together with "The Melting Pot", fan-editors in the field have only a sixteen-times-per-year outlet for reviews of their journals for the nonce.

Even during the time when fan-mag review-columns were at their height—in so-called quantity—they numbered a mere total of *four* out of *twenty-eight* SF periodicals, as of the Fall of 1952. *Startling, Thrilling Wonder Stories*, and *Amazing* have since then dropped the reviews. To my knowledge, however, (and I've a complete file), *Fantastic Adventures* never featured such a column in its history.

I trust this answers the questions of many others who may have been of the same opinion until now.

Meanwhile, in this stark raving mad era of drab commercialism, I think that Bob

Lowndes is doing a far better job than any other editor in the field, by injecting some atmosphere in his publications. My hope is that the other boys in SF mags soon catch on that it takes a little more than just selling stories to make a good magazine. I, like a couple of hundred thousand others, enjoy knowing the *ins and outs*—the story behind the story, so to speak—and reading something in non-fictional (or even semi-fiction) form relevant to the disposition and trait of the publication which I'm buying. Good fiction satisfies me, of course; but no matter how good, it's still fiction. May all your mags soon be monthlies, Bob, with four or five more science-fantasy publications added.

Mr. Menicucci has already sent me a letter wherein he shows a change of heart about the fan-magazine review department; seems he's taken to publishing an amateur publication himself.

So far as I know, just about all of us Knights of the Blue Pencil (as one author put it) wag our tail-bones like all get-out at any bit of praise thrown our way. That's partly because even the best issues we managed to get out—from the cash-customer's viewpoint—somehow fell short of what we wanted to do with 'em. *Something* went wrong somewhere; if we didn't slip up ourselves, then someone else botched here and there, oh, weeping wailing withering woe!

Like yourself, I appreciate what I consider good stories in a magazine—but I've always found that this highly-intangible substance known as "atmosphere", pretty much an aspect of what I find a pleasing editorial personality, can make up for a lot of other failings. Without that special quality, a magazine can run the best stories ever written, and still be as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals unquote.

●

WALLACE McKINLEY

Dear RWL:

The thing that sticks in my memory in your May issue isn't the fact that you had outstanding stories by Abernathy, Liddell, and Jones—or even that very clever tale by Philip K. Dick. Nope, it was one of the short stories, a good but not particularly unusual piece by Charles Dye—"Time Goes To Now".

I've been following Dye's stories for some time now, in your magazines and oth-

[*Turn to page* 122]

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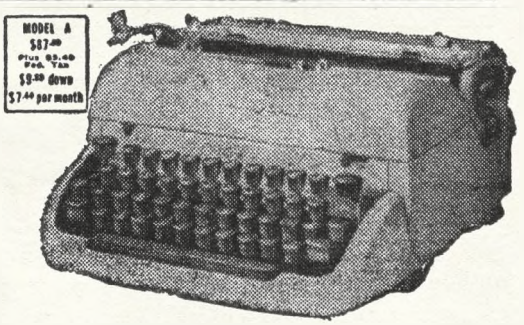

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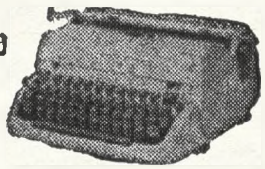

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er people's, and the guy has a quality about him that you don't see too often these days. I can't think of anyone else who has had it in the past decade except L. Ron Hubbard in his better yarns.

It's more of a way of writing than anything else and I'm not sure that I'd define it the way Knight did in his commentary on Hubbard. Maybe you'd call it "style" but I'm not sure that's it, either.

Dye's a teller of tales with a knack of telling a story that keeps you interested—whether it's something startlingly fresh and original or just his own version of a story you've seen many times before. There's a flow to it—not a gush mind you—that makes it linger in your memory much longer than the same story done by another, and maybe better, writer would do. I know I'll go back to such stories as "Because of the Stars", "The Man Who Staked the Stars", and "Escape Valve" much more often than some of the "classics" in the field. And so far I've never been disappointed by any of his stories even when they've been slight in plot of theme.

Incidentally I thought young Beck did quite a fair job with "The Melting Pot". Can't say I find the subject intensely interesting and I hope you won't expand the length of the department. But for my money you can keep it up as long as he wants to do it. Who knows, I might even get around to subscribing to one of these publications some day, if I ever get a real mailing-address, that is.

—*New Canaan, Conn.*

I agree about Hubbard—and you may be right about Dye, too. There's no doubt that he's been coming up in the past year or so; my guess is that he'll go quite a way.

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The Melting Pot

(*continued from page 111*)

I T—*Bob Chambers & Walt Lee, 990 N. 10th St., Coos Bay, Ore.* 15c *a copy.* 2 *to* 3 *times a year.* The third issue had Dr. Keller, Bradbury, stories and articles by Bob and Walt, book and movie reviews, and plenty more. After perusing over this and some of the other items so far reviewed, it seems to me that more and more fan-editors are trying to vie each month with the pro-mags—and durn if they don't often get close to it, too.

●

A S F O—*Ian Macauley, 57 E. Park Lane N. E., Atlanta 5, Ga.* 15c *a copy,* 4/50c, *ten*/$1.00. Oddly enough, one of Willis' finest works, "The Immortal Teacup"—a history of British fandom—is found running serially in each issue. The unique column, "Nods and Becks", starts with the next second issue, I am told...h'mmmm. However, by the curent issue I find Arthur C. Clarke (a potential Bob Bloch, perhaps?) also wandering around, persuading me to think he is fonder of fanmags than the sands of Mars. Macauley tells me he's moving away early this Summer, but with another new mag will continue to bring good quality around as he's done in the past. ASFO will be carried on by another editor.

●

1951 MAGAZINE INDEX—*Charles Freudenthal, 1331 W. Newport Ave., Chicago 13, Ill.* 25c *a copy.* As the title already implies, this is an index of all SF mags published during '51, covering the months, stories, authors, et al., and an excellent supplement to those having bought Don Day's *Index* (covering all SF mags from 1926, but stopping with 1950.)

●

DESTINY—*Malcolm Willits & Earl Kemp, 3477 N. Clark St., Chicago 13, Ill.* 25c *a copy,* 5/$1.00. *Quarterly.* One of fandom's finest. My personal gripe was the black edging decorating some of the pages in the 7th issue. Bob the-name's-familiar Bloch does a vignette on fandom; Fritz Leiber gives a short autobiography, with an index of his works that have been in print. And one of the wisest things done in a long time was the letter column, folded in as a

[*Turn To Page* 126]

SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

separate section in the mag, mimeographed neatly, which to me seems far more logical than incurring it, too, as part of the costs of an *offset* publication. Quite above average from format to contents, *Destiny* has also one of the widest circulations among the fanmags.

●

INFINITY—*Harris & Lawrence, 85 Fairview Ave., Great Neck, L.I., N.Y. 10c a copy, 4/40c. Quarterly.* I thoroughly enjoyed every page, Algis Budrys' articles, and the rest of the lot. For a "first issue" it's *w-a-y* above the usual norm, and here's hoping I see more of these kids in the future.

●

I think that this portion of the column will temporarily solve some of my "listing" problems, since titles mentioned here are, on the average, as good or bad, qualitatively, as are those receiving a regular review. They were just squeezed out; even then, I had to drop ten to fifteen fanmags, until the next edition, due to space limitations. But instead of leaving out twice or three times that amount, this will tentatively have to remain the lesser of two evils. The several key words thrown in should give fan-editor and reader alike a good indication on how the mag rates.

I also intend on keeping some semblance of order; that's why you'll often find the same fanmags rotated between this and the regular reviews portion of "The Melting Pot" (gad, what a title I had to pick out!), instead of cramming in the ones I like best all the time—a dull characteristic, attributed to some of my fanmag-review predecessors, in other magazines.

This, however, doesn't imply that a regular review won't be given to the same publications—even if some have appeared more than once in that category—so long as there's something in it for me to jeer, laud, or be even sanguinary about, however the wind may blow.

By the way, FAPA and SAPS mailings shouldn't be shy in reaching this reviewer from herewith, despite how maltreated

[*Turn To Page* 128]

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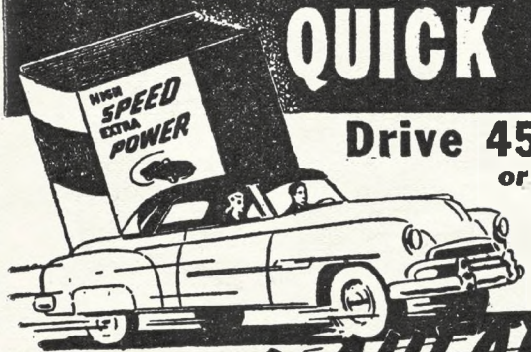

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they may have been elsewhere in the past. I've seen more than a good share of top-notch quality in some of their piles quite often.

And now to this column's *morgue*....

STF STUFF—*Martin Jukousky*, 50-06 31*st Ave., Woodside* 77, *N. Y. Free, God help us!* Can stand with more than just improvement....

FIENDETTA—*Charles Wells*, 405 *E.* 62*nd St., Savannah, Ga.* 15*c a copy*, 8/$1.00. *Bi-monthly.* Third issue and coming along nicely.

KAYMAR TRADER—*K. Martin Carlson*, 1028 *Third Ave., S., Moorehead, Minn.* 10*c a copy*, 4/25*c. Monthly.* Good for buyers and swappers.

ECLIPSE—*Ray Thompson*, 410 *S.* 4*th St., Norfolk, Nebraska.* 5*c a copy. Bimonthly.* Another newcomer starting well.

REASON—*Tom Piper*, 464 19*th St., Santa Monica, Calif.* 10*c a copy*, 6/50*c. Bimonthly.* Mimeo-work a stretch off, but fine contents.

NONSENSE—*Terry Carr*, 134 *Cambridge St., San Francisco* 12, *Calif.* 2/5*c, or* 4/10*c.* All fan-cartoons! Cheap even at twice the price.

PSFS NEWS—*Ozzie Train*, 3507 *N. Sydenham St., Philadelphia* 40, *Pa.* Newssheet of club planning the '53/11th World Convention. Write in enclosing a stamp for *News.*

SCIENCE FICTION ADVERTISER—*Roy Squires*, 1745 *Kenneth Rd., Glendale* 1, *Calif.* 20*c a copy*, 8/$1.00. *Bi-monthly.* Best mag of its category today.

FANTASY TIMES—*James Taurasi*, 137-03 32*nd Ave., Flushing* 54, *N. Y.* 10*c a copy*, 12/$1.00. *Twice monthly.* The ST-Field's best and only newspaper.

FANTASTIC WORLDS—*Sam Sackett*, 1449 *Brockton Ave., Los Angeles* 25, *Calif.* 25*c a copy*, 4/$1.00. *Quarterly.* Short of sheer perfection.

BOOK LIST—*Grandon Co.*, 100 *Empire St., Providence* 3, *R. I.* 25*c a copy.* Checklist guide to more than 400 SF books. A good value.

XENERN INDEXES—*Wm. Knapheide*, 992 *Oak St., No. C, San Francisco* 17, *Calif.* 10*c a copy.* Several indexes of interest to fans and collectors.

INSIDE—*Ron Smith*, 332 *E. Date St., Oxnard, Calif.* 25*c a copy*, 4/$1.00. Maybe outside in price but more than inside in promise.

CONFUSION—*Shelby Vick, Box* 493, *Lynn Haven, Fla.* 10*c a copy*, 12/$1.00. *Bimonthly.* One of the rare original and good mags around.

...All for now. Meanwhile keep on sending them care of: *Calvin Thos. Beck*, 8416 *Elmhurst Ave., Elmhurst* 73, *Long Island, N. Y.*

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THE RECKONING

A Report on Your Votes and Comments

Again, I feel that the cold figures would be misleading, for the story in our May issue that received both the largest amount of first-place votes and enthusiasm came out behind a story which aroused less extreme reaction; some placed the Jones novelet below 2nd place, but they were few — and only one reader registered detestation. But the "7"s almost balanced the "1"s in the case of the Abernathy tale — which means that the story made a more solid impression.

I cannot honestly force a tie in this instance, as the circumstances are not quite as unusual as they were last time.

There was little hate in your comments; two authors, in fact, held your affections — namely, Phil Dick and C. H. Liddell — and the red ink was much restrained. Snarls at Ottum seemed to be due to the brevity of his piece, and there weren't very many of them at that. Here's the box-score.

1.	**Intermission Time (Jones)**	**2.88**
2.	**Lifework (Abernathy)**	**3.25**
3.	**The Visitors (Liddell)**	**3.29**
4.	**The World She Wanted (Dick)**	**3.88**
5.	**Time Goes To Now (Dye)**	**4.41**
6.	**The Mud Puppy (Bailey)**	**4.72**
7.	**She Called Me Frankie (Ottum)**	**4.93**

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★

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Number these in order of your preference, to the left of numeral; if you thought any of them bad, mark an "X" beside your dislikes.

—1. Dreadful Therapy (Walton) .....

—2. Common Time (Blish) .....

—3. Characteristics: Unusual (Garrett) .....

—4. Advice From Tomorrow (Reynolds) ....

—5. Halt The Blue Star's Rising (Lesser) ....

Did you like the article "Evolution of Science Fiction"? .....

Shall we continue "The Melting Pot"? .....

Who are your nominees for the three best letters in "It Says Here"?

1 ..... 2 ..... 3 .....

General comment .....

.....

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You rarely see her. Each day she leaves you a "thank-you" note. Then, one afternoon, you bring your wife home from the airport, and you find Nan Ordway is waiting for you... *HANGING from your bedroom chandelier!*

You're horrified! You try to convince your wife, your friends, and the police that there was NOTHING between you. But Nan's room-mate points an accusing finger and says, *"Nan told me every sordid detail about you...* how you seduced her ... how you promised to divorce your wife and marry her! *She killed herself because of you!"*

You listen — in SHOCKED AMAZEMENT! Then your maid is questioned. She says she found Nan Ordway in YOUR BED one morning, sleeping in YOUR WIFE'S pajamas! White with anger, your wife leaves you. Your friends desert you... and you begin to live in terrible fear of this dead girl who seemed determined to destroy you...

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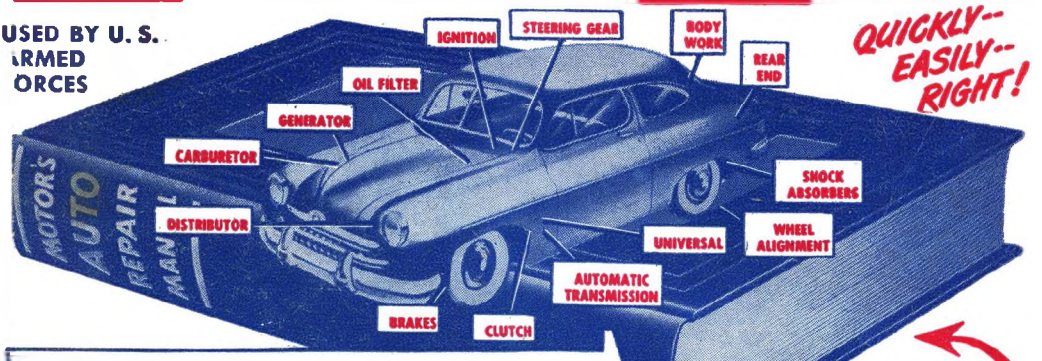

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