The Arkham Sampler

SUMMER, 1948

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HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT
by Samuel Loveman

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BOOKS OF THE QUARTER

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY

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A KINK IN SPACE-TIME

by H. Russell Wakefield

I had been feeling somewhat better since coming to this so quiet, remote place, far less strained and apprehensive; that shattering sense of fear of the unknown, that formless, hen-eyed terror had almost left me. My head-sounds, too, especially that horrid sudden bell-tolling, had been less frequent and intense. I was beginning to be oh so *tenderly* hopeful of eventual recovery. I had written Kostner about this and he'd replied he was very pleased and that all was going well.

And then, four days ago, I saw *him,* running around the bend of the river from the west. That first sight of him affected me most powerfully. It was almost dusk and he was coming down the small way so that I could not discern his face, but it was his general guise, the "wholeness" of him, which seemed so unexplicably "known" to me. He did not, I think, even glance at me, but hurried on his way. I gained the impression that he was greatly agitated. He disappeared behind the cottage where the river bends to the north. I judged him to be a man of near my own age, my stature, too, and build.

For a moment I had a violent desire to follow him. Why? I cannot tell. He was a stranger to the hamlet; that I was certain. I hadn't seen him here before. Then why was he so—so—familiar to me!

Any worry, any strain on my mind is terribly bad for me; Kostner told me it would be. He warned me most straightly against any excitement or mental stress. That is why he sent me to this quiet place and I have done my best to obey him—but then *this* happened. I was trembling and in great distress. I only just managed to reach the inn and get to my room. The bell began tolling most resonantly, the throbbing overtones beating on my brain. I had slipped far back. I made a great effort to "stop the rot" and regain control of myself. Why had I upset myself like this? How? Just seeing and passing a stranger. A stranger? A stranger to this place, but was he a stranger to me? The effort to think clearly and steadily about him over-taxed me and I began to hear those voices again; the one that kept repeating, "Mad! Mad! Mad! Mad!" And the other that chuckled and suddenly whispered, "Look behind you! Quick! Look behind you!" And I looked behind me, and of course

there was nothing. The sweat poured down on me. Who could he be, the one who'd passed me by? Why did he seem familiar? Could I have met him, known him in the past, at school, at Oxford or what was the connection? My mind began to blur. The same thought came to it over and over again, and I repeated it out loud. "Possibly," I muttered, "I met him at Oxford. Yes, possibly, at Oxford. Possibly at Oxford."

How ludicrous that sounds! Yet that inability to pass a thought-point, that echo-back from the barrier, that crazy reiteration is intolerably disintegrating. One can see, as it were, the thought hurl itself against the screen, split into its sparklng, chromatic elements, form itself again in the brain, hurl itself, split . . . . .! One feels one will never be able to think sanely again. One *has* to break that chain. I took a strong—an overdose of the hyoscine and bromide Kostner had given me for just such an emergency, and presently I began to regain a drugged grip on myself. I had some food brought to my room and forced myself to eat it, almost retching at each mouthful. And then I lay down on my bed. I improved steadily; the bell tolled more softly and died away, the voices merged themselves, as it were, into the proper sounds of an autumn night, my heart quieted down, general inhibition spread from area to area, and I slept till dawn.

When I awoke I was feeling far more composed. I was still vibrating, but the shake was dying in the string. I proceeded to argue myself out of an agitation which, I vehemently assured myself, had been unjustified, causeless and cowardly, merely one more sympton of a disorder which demanded moral courage to encounter and only time could cure. I told myself that that sensation of, "I have been here before" can apply to *persons* as to *places,* and is usually, possibly *always,* a baseless mind-construction, a mere freak, a prank of memory. Resolutely I wrote a full account of the experience to Kostner and assured him I had won a most reassuring victory over my trouble. I more than half believed it as I signed my name.

I determined, if possible, to find that fellow, speak to him, identify him, and once for all cleanse my mind of its perilous obsession. I spent the morning extemporising, improvising, mathematically, a phrase of my own which all mathematics will understand. As in the case of music, I believe, it is often a pregnant mode of slipping into true composition. It was so now.

My brain was brilliantly clear, cleansed by the storm, and I found a concise and elegant expression for a junctional relationship which had long eluded me. I was much elated and my spirits soared high. Such swift swings of mood, always at precarious equilibrium, are characteristic of my malady.

I rested after lunch and did not go out till four o'clock. I took a stroll, first through the village, keeping my eyes open for sight of the fellow. Then I went to the pool by the bridge where the fishermen congregate. He wasn't of their company. I began to be reassured that I should not see him again.

With the dusk came a dense low-level mist and as it thickened, I turned for home. Suddenly *he* passed me, coming from the east this time. He came up from behind me and passed quickly into the murk, so that again I could not see his face, yet somehow that sense of familiarity was sharply intensified. Something on the ground attracted my attention; he had left behind him a trail of soaking river-slime. Suddenly I felt for him great loathing and some fear. This was caused by the *resemblance,* I feel sure. Professor Ingrid told me he was once introduced to a man reputed to be his double, and that he was seized with such a violent distaste for him he had to hurry from his presence. These things lie deep and obscure. I made a fierce effort to control myself; the effort brought back that thunderous bell and a whisper from the voices. After all he was just someone who'd come over for the fishing, I told myself. He must have fallen in, lost his footing in the mist, and been hurrying home to change. Then, why had he been *running* yesterday? But what business was that of mine!

I saw it was useless and dangerous to carry on this inane internecine duel in my mind. I must *meet* him, *speak* to him and so exorcise him. It should be easily done. I would find out his identity from Mr. Rimble, the landlord of the inn, and then I would seek him out and destroy him! Yes, that is what I said, "Destroy him." I was at once invaded by a great horror, for that murderous impulse had welled-up with irresistible urge from my subconscious. For a mad moment I indulged my hate unrestrainedly. I hated his height, his thin, weak body. I despised his folly in falling into the river; no doubt his mind was as feeble as his frame! A skulking figure, leaving a trail of slime! One day such a piteous, lanky dolt would find his brain going—just a little more every day, his memory failing,

a horrid dazzle before his eyes, that breathless longing for sleep, that heart that raced and throbbed and hammered in the throat. And then one other day, he would ask himself, "Where is that bell tolling?" And in a flash of shame and fear know it was the Angelus of Madness sounding within him, and those voices—not those of friends for sure!—would start their sadist prattle, the one that told him with ruthless reiteration he was, "Mad! Mad! Mad! Mad!"—the other that slyly mocked and fooled him, "Look behind you! Quick! Look behind you!" And I looked behind me, dupe and craven that I was, and there was that trail of slime passing into the wall of fog.

Directly I reached the inn I took another dose of the drug and lay on my bed till it was doing its work—more slowly this time; one day only a Death-Dose will work upon me! Then I went to the Landlord's parlour, and after we had had a drink together and exchanged some maddening commonplaces, I said, "Who is the tall stranger, Mr. Rimble?" I know the words came out unnaturally, explosively. "Tall stranger?" he repeated. "Well, I haven't any such. How tall? As tall as you?"

"Yes, about my height, I suppose."

"How old would he be?"

"In his early forties, I should say."

"Where did you see him?"

"On the path by the river."

"Would he be a thin or a stoutish man?"

"Thin. I have passed him twice, yesterday and again this evening."

"A gentleman, as you might say?"

"Yes, I suppose so. I couldn't be sure."

I could see that Rimble was regarding me curiously. Already I regretted having broached the accursed topic.

"Is he dark or fair?" he asked.

"Dark, I think. I think, too, he's a fisherman, for today he left a trail of damp behind him."

"Why should he do that, I wonder? All the fishing is from the bank," said the landlord slowly.

"Possibly he had fallen in," I said, wishing I was back in my room, "he had no rod with him."

"I think if anyone had fallen in and lost his gear, I'd have heard of it," said the landlord, "but, sir, I'll make some inquiries and let you know."

"Oh, don't trouble to do that," I protested, "I was just a little curious, that was all."

"No trouble, sir, *I'm* curious too. The only tall, dark, slim gentleman I've seen around here of late is you, Sir George." And he gave a quick, uneasy laugh.

I left him, feeling deeply humiliated. I could see he was just *humouring* me. I hadn't realized properly till then that he quite recognized my state and that I was to be *humoured* in my delusions and treated like an ailing, stupid child. His clumsiness had revealed that clearly enough. I felt most a deep depression, a dense, spiritual darkness without the thinnest beam of light. I was *not* improving. This—this—this *incident* proved it. I meet a stranger, someone who does not concern me in the least and at once for no reason I am gripped by this insane obsession. *Insane* is the word. Just a tall, thin, dark fellow!

I wish Kostner was here so that I could tell him about it. Those in my state are terribly lonely. If they are even worse than I am, perhaps their fate is easier. They are segregated with their sorry kin, it's true, but they are not so *isolated.* Of course I have friends but I will not inflict myself upon them, for I know that nothing is more psychically destructive than contact with a tainted mind. Only the hardiest or the most callous can endure such connection. The higher, more sensitive, shun the mentally sick, for it is always their recessive horror that they may have to call them *Brother* one day. The sanity of all men, and the sanest know it best, is balanced on a razor's edge, and any weakening will allow the virus of madness to take hold.

I haven't seen his *face.* Twice he has passed me without revealing it. I must see it! But supposing I recognize it to be —! It cannot be helped. I have a passionate longing to see it. I cannot endure this suspense. That was an accursed thing Rimble said, "The only tall, dark, slim gentleman I've seen around here of late is you." He meant something by that! It was an insinuation, I know it! What he really meant was—no, I won't follow up that horrid, dangerous line of thought. But I *must* see his face. When I meet him, I'll go right up to him and compel him to show it me. And now I must try and sleep. It can't go on, this loneliness, this febrile and fatuous state of mind, this generalized torpidity of my brain. It cannot be endured. For I remember when that brain was an almost flawless mechanism, and my temperament cool, unhurried, undeviable from its

purposes; when I was supremely confident, sought out and respected. The contrast is intolerable. It must end soon. I wasn't ready, when trouble came.

A bad night with poignant dreams of the old days. When I came down at lunch-time Rimble said with a sort of uneasy smirk, "Well, I've made some inquiries, sir, but I can't find any trace of your *tall, thin, dark* gent; no one but *you* seems to have seen him." He said it with some obvious animosity; I think he was wishing I'd leave his place; wondering what I'd be up to next.

"That's all right," I replied, my heart beginning to pound. "No doubt he was just a stranger passing through. And no doubt, after one look at Clayton-on-Stow, very glad to pass through the dreariest backwater in Christendom. Please think no more about it. I am no longer interested in him, merely envious of him that he has escaped so easily from this derelict midden."

Rimble saw my unstable temper had taken a leap and cringed. "Very good, Sir George," he said quickly, "that's what he was, for sure, just a passer-by."

During that lovely afternoon, so restful, warm and shining, such profound shadows on the stream, the year dying with such grace, I knew some uncertain peace of mind, merely due, I suppose, to the fact that the effect of the drug had not quite yet worn off. He'd been just a stranger passing by, I thought; my interest in him just a sign of my disease; just a temporary peak on its graph. I should see him no more. But if I did, I should say to him, "You were just a peak on the graph of my disease, dear man. You didn't realize, did you, how oddly you'd been symbolized!" If I saw his face *then,* there'd be a queer look on it! I drowsed with the day till the mist began thinly lifting the level of the land, and then I rose to go home.

He came running as before, like some crazed beast, straight ahead, unseeing, with a vile animal lope. After he'd passed me I knew a moment's fearful indecision. The bell beat sonorously many times. The voices began their vile chattering. Then I ran in pursuit of him. He must not go before I had seen his face! As he rounded the bend he was twenty yards ahead of me. When I saw him again he was standing facing the river. Then he flung up his arms and hurled himself in. A man at the cottage door ran down and leaped in after him. He came to the surface and went down again. At last he appeared with a body in his arms.

Others went to his aid and he and his burden were dragged to the bank. I thrust my way between them, and then for the first tme I saw his face.

"It's the queer gent from the *Stook and Sickle,*" said one of the men.

"I'm very much obliged to you, Dr. Kostner, for coming to give evidence" said the Coroner. "Sir George Maskell had a severe nervous breakdown, I understand?"

"Yes. He was a mathematical physicist of the highest order. He worked for the country untiringly during the war and was knighted for his services. Shortly after the end of hostilities he broke down through incessant self-effacing, self-sacrificing over-work."

"Was he recovering, do you think?"

"There was a chance he might have got better, but I was always pessimistic about him, though, of course, I never allowed him to know it. The lesion he had suffered was profound."

"You have, I know, read the document that was found in his pocket after his body was recovered."

"I have."

"Is there anything you would care to say about it?"

"Nothing whatever."

"It seems," said the Coroner with deference and diffidence, "that he actually foresaw, literally and precisely foresaw, his own fate, met his own ghost as it were?"

Kostner made no reply.

"That would seem," said the Coroner hurriedly, "unexplicable, impossible!"

"Those are words," said the specialist coldly and aloofly, "I have learnt profoundly to distrust."

He glanced out of the window of the school-room to where a hearse was waiting, the driver, his antique black topper glinting rustically in the sun, nodding over his drowsy nags.

NIGHT IN THE CITY

By Geraldine Wolf

The rivers of the wind, confused,
their dirt waves spreading, self accused,
sweep through the canyoned city streets;
before the towering retreats
where man is prisoned with his mate,
in cells of masonry and glass.
And screaming down behind the weight
of dusty tidal wave, they pass,
the riders of the wind, the apes
whose teeth are bared, whose lips drip foam.
But man with lowered blinds, escapes,
is safe within his narrow home.

Ant-wise, his hills loom high and strong,
the inundation of the night
swirls round the base with shrill witch song,
and bat wings beat in rhythmic flight.
But he is safe whose cave is lit,
whose fire burns sure; all ragged now
the curtain of the sky is slit
and from the moon's cold scabrous brow
drift scorpion dreams with wide-webbed claws,
down through the spacious darkness, down
past frosty stars whose grinning jaws
clatter in speechless mirth; past brown
embittered serpents coiled in sleep
their scales sun-scorched; past shivering
lost fragmentary things that creep
and whine; down the long breathless swing
past the dogs whimpering beneath
the whips of Ursa; dreams of fear
that clotted clouds bring forth, bequeath
to man's perception, to his ear—
that inner ear, always awake,
so he is caught, self-prisoner,
and lashed and tortured at the stake.
The curtains at his windows stir
as night-things peer with small white eyes,

and press small furry bodies near
and plead and cry with plaintive cries;
the scratchings of their small nails sear
his sweating face, and he must go
where they will go, and leaping free,
feel the hot moon breath, come to know
—the touch of those he cannot see.
His is the voice that laughs, his scream
the one that echoes through the night
and his the voice within the dream
and his the fear, the dreadful flight.

THE NOVELS OF M. P. SHIEL

By A. Reynolds Morse

Matthew Phipps Shiel—one of the greatest writers ever to use the English language—was the last link the literary present had with the greatest era of the novel. And yet after his death at the age of nearly 82, only thirteen lonely mourners were present that wan, snowbound morning of February 24, 1947 to hear Edward Shanks apostrophize him as one of the noblest writers and greatest prophets the world has ever known!

A fiery novelist whose writings are composed of endless stylistic and literary enigmas, Shiel's stories range from murder mysteries to tales of other worlds, and so unusual are all his books that they are sought by collectors of the weird, the fantastic, and the strange, with little regard for topic or title.

In *The Works of M. P. Shiel: A Study in Bibliography,* I have already covered most of the salient features of his books (some editions could not be located either in this country or in England), and also treated such varied topics as the mystery of the missing notebooks of his last work *Jesus,* and his collaboration with Louis Tracy under the pen name "Gordon Holmes". As a protest against the usual dust-dry bibliography, I even included some running commentaries about the contents of the books being collected. But I was unable to treat this magnificent writer from a literary point of view. My unbounded enthusiasm completely awed a potential publisher, who cringed at the mention of M. P. Shiel on the same page as Herman Melville, and who shuddered with fear for our mutual reputations if some really academic person should belabor my attempt to relate Shiel

to the German school of *Sturm und Drang,* or to E. T. W. Hoffman!

What of the literary background of M. P. Shiel, who, with his unbounded energy, ran several miles each evening, worked at night, and slept by day? One critic calls him merely a "literate Bernarr Macfadden", and yet another says that his book *The Purple Cloud* (1901) will live as long as *The Odyssey!* The dearth of critical information about him co-exists in strange contrast to his disciples' enthusiasm. The magic realm of Redonda of which Shiel was King, is actually a world apart from the usual traditions of literature as most impatient modern readers know it.

While Shiel's tales of high adventure, murder, world conquests and cataclysms are fast-paced, they are not without intellectual content. The stumbling block: his advanced contempt of science, of the ogre-state, of the Overman, of the "greatly-good" which man's prayers cannot sway (as opposed to the "little good" which man is taught to believe he can alter by ritual and prayer for his own selfish advantage, as blessing our tanks in war), all these concepts interwoven in his stories will cause the skimming reader to wonder why on earth bother with a book of fantastic adventure where the mere "egg" of a supernatural being holds up the course of amazing events on a flying island in space for over fifty pages to discourse on "how life climbs".

The process of becoming a Shiel enthusiast is not an easy one, for, added to the handicap that his works are almost all out of print and difficult to find in any edition in the used market, there is the fact that Shiel's style is flamboyant, his vocabulary unbounded, his knowledge of details apparently limitless in every field from medicine to antique weapons, and his regard for chaste literary conventions like punctation and sentence structure nil. But the circle of his admirers has been steadily if slowly expanding, and with all due regard for time, Shiel's literary background should have at least a cursory investigation.

Probably the most consistent feature of Shiel's some thirty novels is his use of a hero in constant struggle with fate, or with another soul of equal but cruel stature. Most of his characters are typified rather by their action than by their metaphysical thought. That is why his stories always leave one breathless. Generally (but not always) they have the momentum necessary to carry the novitiate past the barriers of the author's antics

and digressions. There is almost no Hamlet-like doubt and indecision in a man like Lepsius in *The Isle of Lies* (1909) who makes himself ruler of the world by sheer superior energy and intelligence, for he was a biological experiment who was never taught the meaning of the word "forget". Among Shiel's major heroes, from Adam Jeffson in *The Purple Cloud* and Hogarth in *The Lord of the Sea* (1901) to Dr. Warwick in *The Young Men Are Coming!* (1937), almost none fails to fit into a pattern of action and ethics, almost none fails to reflect Shiel's worship of moral force.

Tracing this concept of hero-worship, it seems to root in the German school—in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister,* for example, from which, when Carlyle translated it he must have got the germ of his hero-concept. Like the young Goethe, like Carlyle, Shiel leads us to believe that action *not* speculation, ethics *not* an abstract morality are the chief means of overcoming doubt and negation.

But Shiel's characters differ from the Germans' in one main essential: their attitudes are not entirely destructive either towards themselves or society. Werther committed suicide rather than face the ills of society, but Lepsius in *The Isle of Lies,* Baron Gregor Kolar in *The Last Miracle* (1906), and of course Hogarth in *The Lord of the Sea* waged terrific battles to reorder society according to their own well-advanced lights. Ennobled Jack Hay, who becomes an Overman after some 725 pages of adventure and tribulation, met his death by leaping from a window onto a slippery roof as the police enter to arrest him for a crime of which he could prove himself innocent, but he did not intend to kill himself, for he had been in far tighter spots before. (His is but one of some seven deaths in the last two chapters of *The Weird O' It* (1902) which wind up the long adventure: one man actually laughs himself to death!) Llwellyn in *This Knot of Life* (1909), even after losing his fabulous underground cache of gold to his wife's greedy lover Abrahams, still holds to his magnanimous ideas which drove his selfish wife to her death, with her lover and child in a flaming mansion. And even inert, scholarly Aubrey Langler in *The Last Miracle* makes one fierce and exciting sortie against the arch-foe of the expiring church entrenched in his Styrian castle.

But not Shiel, nor Carlyle, nor Goethe knew the formula for Man: for the dull, the stupid, the average, they had no use,

and they looked up from a moronic society to a Hero—an Overman. Herr Teufelsdrockh in *Sartor Resartus* never gleamed half as brightly as even such a bold rascally visionary as Dr. Cyril Krasinski in *Dr. Krasinski's Secret* (1929), although both writers had the same concept, the same disregard of form, the same cackle of words, the same use of punctuation for its dramatic effect, and the same didactic backward leaning.

Shiel's closest literary relationships are definitely with the past, with the early German movement known as *Sturm und Drang*. This apparent relationship cannot be traced to any actual influence, but rather to similar temperaments acted upon by roughly the same forces. The young Goethe in *Werther's Leiden* and particularly *Goetz Von Berlichingen* is close to *The Lord of the Sea*: short, graphic, almost tableau scenes, swift flashing glimpses of robust action, and a casual or random sequence of events. Then too, Shiel has all the violence and bombast of the poet.

Both Shiel and the members of *Sturm und Drang* like the youthful Schiller, Klinger, and Herder conceived of their literary works as depicting a continual struggle between two protagonists, or between the protagonist and Fate. Shan O'Shannon, the love-smitten gamekeeper in *The White Wedding* (1908); Edward Denman whose inheritance was hidden in an unpregnable vault to which he could not find the key, in *Unto the Third Generation* (1903); and Drayton in *The Evil That Men Do* (1904) who of all men to impersonate picked one not only of vile temperament quite unlike his own, but one who was guilty of a sex murder! all these people typify a blind relentless clash with opposing destinies.

Usually the leading character is a hero in the most literal and complete sense of the word; a cosmic Appolonian soul who exists in ceaseless violent strife with his environment, sometimes in victory, like Prince Teddy in *The Dragon* (1913), and sometimes in defeat as with Hardy in *The Yellow Danger* (1898.

Shiel has the same tone as the Germans, the same surge and push, the same sledge-hammer numbings, the same intensely emotional and impractical approach to life. The Germans, like Shiel, will never be understood unless we realize that both combine the most sentimental feelings with the most cruel realism. A friend tells of seeing a duel-bloodied German student turning from slicing an opponent to stoop and caress the first violet of

spring while murmuring heartfelt sentimentalisms through his bandages! This dichotomy, this dualism accounts for some of the unevenness people find in Shiel: he leaps from a sympathetic examination of minute details to great dazzling impersonal generalizations with such terrific speed that to a slow or complacent mind many of his works may seem merely a juxtaposition of extraneous paragraphs.

Both Shiel and the German poets have a predilection for imaginary biographical novels such as *The Weird O' It* and *The Evil That Men Do*. And the anti-Napoleonic Germans would have delighted in a concept such as the frustration of the French attempt to kidnap the Duke of Wellington in *The Man-Stealers* (1900).

Like Fichte, or better still, E. T. W. Hoffman who laid the background for the growth of the weird and fantastic story, Shiel vigorously condemns the conventional narrowly defined literary form of his own real contemporaries like Kipling and Stevenson. His literary mold is freshly determined by his subject matter, and he specifically recasts every story, so that we find none of the quaint predictable patterns used by his auctoral contemporaries like John Galsworthy and Hugh Walpole. In a sense, Shiel made his own traditions, and he exists apart like Arthur Machen, Barbey d'Aurevilly, and Frederick Baron Corvo, although he combines the features of an E. Phillips Oppenheim, an Edgar Wallace, an Olaf Stapledon in one very literary enigma whose qualities are so sublime that they preclude the further development of such unfit analogies.

Shiel's use of archaic diction, "eccentric" words, non-dictionary meanings, tremendous metaphors, trope, hyperbole, and even rotomantade or a cheap boasting, at times, are all part of a parallel, and again a backward-looking Teutonic concept of poetic narrative. Often Shiel goes the unhappy German poets one better, confounds his critics, and warms his disciples to their love by using countless phrases and indeed whole sentences, not for their lexical meaning at all, but for their word-music, their sound, their rhythm, and chance internal rimes.

In the plentiful use of fancy and bathos, Shiel looks backward to the Gothic novel, where his kinship is evident: his extensive use of anagorisis— the romantic or dramatic denouement—the elaborate and extravagant happenings, and the trick endings seen in books like *Say Au R'Voir But Not Goodbye* (1933)

where a lost ship floats itself at the last minute to redeem its owner, or *The Black Box* (1930) where Agnes Heygate finally unravels an apparent murder. The continuous confusion of lost letters and misplaced wills and mistaken identities are all devices long dropped from modern fiction but Shiel uses them in *The Lost Viol* (1905), and in the "Gordon Holmes" mysteries *The Late Tenant* (1907) and *The House of Silence* (1911) in which he collaborated with Louis Tracy, the fictioneer.

Shiel's social criticism in books like *How the Old Women Got Home* (1927) and *Children of the Wind* (1923) also follows along early romantic lines. His blustering materialism and extreme mechanism call up memories of the early victorian rationalists. His vague messianic socialism seems to lean toward the French philosophers of the 18th century, toward La Metrie and Rousseau. He fuses his mild socialism with the concept of the Overman who dominates his books in very much the same fashion that our exuberant Irish author dominated his own personal environment. His life and loves, to be told by John Gawsworth, the English poet now working on Shiel's official biography, will prove the point with details space doesn't permit me to.

One critic has remarked that all Shiel's characters mirror his own abundant energy, his own bustling self—they merely change a mask in each story! Shiel's Overman concept in itself could occupy us for many pages: it is difficult to define: it is something one must *feel* to understand. One cannot ever comprehend his characters who speak in a cryptic, florid and erratic manner at best, unless one first sees how he came to shape their attitudes by reference to scientific truth based on observed facts. Projected into our own pathetic world where we are falsely guided by religious truth insecurely based on folk beliefs and superstitions which the conventional mind has hardened into facts, Shiel's people may seem out of place. If they do not have the Overman point of view at the outset, both they and the reader are chastened and made holy by the purging effect of a maelstrom of events.

Before any discussion of Shiel's literary style, I might mention the parallels that can be found in subject matter, style and method in his works and Herman Melville's. Both authors are intensely individualistic, both completely disregarded current literary standards, and paid more attention to their own inner

evaluation of reality than to more generally accepted modes. The chief difference between the two great writers, however, is in the contrast of Melville's mysticism with Shiel's materialism.

It is interesting also to compare Shiel with H. G. Wells. Both wrote at about the same tme, both used fantasy as a vehicle, both had somewhat socialistic leanings. Both were critical of the ogre-ignorance imposed and fostered by organized religion. But their approaches were different. Shiel's fancy varies obliquely from Wells' imagination. Shiel's images bubble up from the lower reaches of perception and memory very much like the symbolism of some forms of paranoia; Wells' imagination, while boundless, is still relatively lifeless. He visions none of the childish Utopias, uses none of the mechanical plots or highly artificial literary devices of Shiel. Wells represents a coldly logical kind of thinking that has been of a more or less uniform academic pattern ever since Plato, while Shiel represents a non-logical, emotional, "feeling-sensation", living approach to the constantly changing world where logic is *per se* ridiculous.

M. P. Shiel's literary style is a topic of endless controversy. The professional critics differ about whether he dashed his books off in a hurry or took great pains with them. Carl Van Vechten says in *Excavations—A Book of Advocacies* (Knopf, New York, 1926): Shiel's "physical vigor burns with an immarcescible glow through most of his writing in the guise of literary vitality . . . . It also accounts for most of his faults, for some of his books seem to be written at a white heat which burns away the cold critical faculty so essential to the proper revision of a manuscript." And on the other hand, Edward Shanks writing in *The London Mercury,* for May, 1929, comments: "Mr. Shiel's style . . . . . is found by some repellant, a judgment which I shall not attempt to controvert, but by none, I think, could its special qualities be reckoned as faults due to want of skill or thought. Often it errs, even to the enthusiast's tastes by having had too many pains spent upon it. Mr. Shiel loves to arrange his syllables by their sounds, exercising more care in the ordering of assonances and striking clashes than the most artificial of poets."

Shiel himself said that fine prose should be so musical that it appeals to the ear as being actually more beautiful than poetry. In his assonance, dissonance, his curious clashing verbal antics, his complete disregard of sentence and paragraph structure, his admirers and detractors will always find a wealth of evidence for

their varied contentions. The author has outlined his concept of the qualifications for a writer in his seventy-page essay called *On Reading* which incongruously prefaces *This Knot of Life.* In that long and involved paper he blasts at the sacred Shakespeare legend, and breaks writing down into various categories and phases. He then lists the writers with the best tone, style, content, etc., and does not hesitate to place himself among the immortals when he feels he so deserves.

Shiel revised many of his books over the years, and in the revisions he never altered the plot—never introduced aeroplanes, for example—in a book like *The Yellow Danger* which in the 1930's publishers were persistently rejecting for re-issue because it was "dated". His revisions typically consist of deletions. In 1898 in *The Yellow Danger,* he wrote: "There was something now detestably baleful in the aspect of the water. The great waves died to a glassy heaving smoothness. Only, here and there in irregular patches over the surface, broke out stretches of vapid foam, or ghastly bubbles. And the ocean went gadding, gadding northward. This is the first mood of the Maelstrom . . . . Then a wonder happened. A string of barges shot suddenly askew, and went wildly hasting to the east; a hundred thousand barges were flightily ranging in curves of every shape and direction over the sea, flying a while—then slowly stopping—then flying off in new curves again." In the unpublished revision, from the manuscript in my collection dated Sunday, March 8, 1936, we read: "There was something now detestably baleful in the aspect of the ocean. The waves had died down to a heaving smoothness. Only here and there in patches broke out stretches of vapid foam, and there stretches of bubbles. And gladly the waters went gadding, gadding northward. This is the first mood of the Maelstrom . . . . Then a wonder happened: a string of barges shot askew, and went hasting on a curve eastward, and another string shot askew on a westward curve; and in a minute a hundred thousand barges were flightily ranging in curves over the ocean, spurting a while—then slowing down, only to spurt off on new curves."

Shiel could turn from this hot-paced writing, from using words as a mad-man might string beads, and produce a stylistically straight-forward adventure story like *Contraband of War* (1899) which has little outward resemblance to books produced about the same time. *Shapes in the Fire* (1896) contains some of his most

magnificent prose, and contrasts so markedly with the personal battles of the Spaniard Appadacca and the American Dick Hocking that it is like trying to believe that Poe's *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* came from the same pen as the adventures of Horatio Hornblower.

The early love story, *The Yellow Wave* (1905) told against a background of a Russo-Jap war, and its climactic death scene where the young lovers die in immolation between their fathers' respective armies is told virtually without adjectives, and is in marked contrast to *The Last Miracle* (1906) which relates Baron Gregor Kolar's attempts to shatter the foundations of Christianity with a series of false apparitions caused by reflected crucifixions (real murders) in churches all over the world. For ten years, from 1913 to 1923 nothing came from Shiel's pen. His final productive period included a variety of stories ranging from a novel dealing with Lazurus, who as Prince Surazal never died again after Christ's touch, *This Above All,* (1933) to *The Black Box* (1930) where the victim's body is found in its coffin surrounded by mysterious objects. And two volumes of short stories revised from earlier periodical material *Here Comes the Lady,* (1928); and *The Invisible Voices,* (1935), along with *Children of the Wind* (1923), a tale of modern war and a search for a lost heiress in dark Africa were also among the novelist's last books. His style remained flamboyant and very much alive over the years, as did his surge of ideas, his love of profound detail, and all the other violent and unusual features of his writing which have made him great and at the same time limited his audience.

For the last years of his long life, Shiel lived in solitude in a cottage called L'Abri, at Horsham, Sussex, England, working on a biblical study to be called *Jesus,* based on a re-interpretation of the book of Luke. After his death on February 17, 1947, his literary executor found that half of the forty notebooks of his final draft of the book has been misplaced, and his heirs are even now conducting a spirited search for these lost papers of the novelist.

M. P. Shiel has had two marked periods of popularity. One beginning in 1895 with the publication of *Prince Zaleski* and ending in 1913 with *The Dragon,* and the other really beginning when he was "re-discovered" in 1929 by Victor Gollancz, A. A. Knopf, and James Henle of the Vanguard Press. Twice an apparent mantle of obscurity seemed to descend on him, the second

after the publication of his last book *The Young Men Are Coming!* But gradually booksellers have come to rue their sale of "remaindered" copies of How the *Old Woman Got Home* which went into four printings, and their early fiction culls which often used to include *The Lord of the Sea* and *The Purple Cloud.* Today Shiel's books are increasingly valuable and sought for by collectors in any edition, and since Shiel was not a "collected author" when he was writing, books in mint condition are scarce indeed. And several publishers like Arkham House are bringing out collections of his stories unavailable in any form for two generations.

The day must come when Shiel will be given the formal recognition that his enthusiasts feel is surely his due. But to some his writing will always be merely mad and slap-dash, and to others it will always have the sublime music of the spheres.

NO STRANGER DREAM

by Clark Ashton Smith

One rapid gesture of a supple arm
Has made your body strange and fabulous;
Mystery folds you and reveals you, thus
Weaving anew the seven-circled charm.
Love needs no stranger dream; your face calls back
The feet that flying Lemures have drawn
To years beyond the darkness and the dawn;
And thrusts afar the impending Zodiac.
He that has been the pilgrim of dark shrines,
And sued the silver wraith of Baaltis,
Would ask no wonder more arcane than this:—
To watch, in a place of summer grass and pines,
The spangled spectrum somnolently spun
In your deep hair by the seaward-turning sun.

THE LOVED DEAD*

By C. M. Eddy, Jr.

(*The Loved Dead* was first published in the large May-June-July 1924 issue of *Weird Tales.* The next issue to appear was the November issue of that year, in smaller format, which contained reader-reactions. "The yarn started out to be a little short study in psychology under the tentative title of *The Leaping Heart,* i. e., a heart that leaped from sheer joy whenever in the presence of the dead," writes C. M. Eddy from his Providence home. "H. P. L. discussed it with me, and we decided that it might do for *Weird Tales.* One point on which we were agreed was that too many stories told by a hero now deceased leave the reader completely up in the air as to how the story could ever have seen the light of day. H. P. L. calmly informed me that my protagonist was suffering from a medically-recognized mental ailment, and that he couldn't be blamed for anything he did during the course of the story. He even named the malady—a long Latin term which I had never heard before. Once I had placed my protagonist in the graveyard, the story wrote itself. I asked Baird, at first, was afraid to use it. Finally, the powers that be decided only minor changes need be made. Off it went to *Weird Tales,* but Edwin Baird. at first, was afraid to use it. Finally, the powers that be decided to include it in the big Anniversary Issue. Then the fun started! P.T.A. groups and church organizations in several parts of the country protested vigorously, and actually succeeded in having the issue removed from the newsstands in many cities and towns. There have been, indeed, those who have suggested that this censorship stimulated enough of a demand for the unique magazine to save it from extinction!" The November *Eyrie* led off with a confession that the new editor, Farnsworth Wright, had "something on his mind about which he wants advice from the readers." He went on to ask them what they thought of horror stories—"really strong stories, such as *The Loved Dead?*" One reader had written that the story "nauseated" him, "but I could not stop reading, for it was fascinatingly told. But why *will* you feed us such disgusting themes?" The reader ended up somewhat illogically for a reader of *Weird Tales* by asking that the editor spare readers more stories such as *The Loved Dead.* "for the sake of all that is sweet and wholesome." And what did the readers think? By the issue for January, 1925, the editor was able to report that "those who want horror stories have distinctly the advantage, but many qualify their demand by stipulating that horror stories must not be disgusting." The conclusion Farnsworth Wright came to was that "the readers of *Weird Tales* don't want anything nauseating, but they do want to read eery, thrilling and bizarre tales of the Poe type—tales such as they cannot get in any other magazine." By and large, however, the concensus of opinion was against stories like *The Loved Dead,* and Wright thereafter shied away from publishing them, a decision that was unique indeed for the editor of a magazine subtitled *The Unique Magazine.*)

It's midnight. Before dawn they will find me and take me to a black cell where I shall languish interminably, while insatiable desires gnaw at my vitals and wither up my heart, till at last I become one with the dead that I love.

My seat is the foetid hollow of an aged grave; my desk is the back of a fallen tombstone worn smooth by devastating centuries; my only light is that of the stars and a thin-edged moon, yet I can see as clearly as though it were mid-day. Around me on every side, sepulchral sentinals guarding unkempt graves, the tilting, decrepit headstones lie half-hidden in masses of nauseous, rotting vegetation. Above the rest, silhouetted against the livid sky, an august monument lifts its austere, tapering spire like the spectral chieftain of a lemurian horde. The air is heavy with the noxious odors of fungi and the scent of damp, mouldy earth, but to me it is the aroma of Elysium. It is still—terrifyingly still—with a silence whose very profundity bespeaks the solemn and the hideous. Could I choose my habitation it would be in the heart of some such city of putrefying flesh and crumbling bones; for their nearness sends ecstatic thrills through my soul, causing the stagnant blood to race through my veins and my torpid heart to pound with delirious joy—for the presence of death is life to me!

My early childhood was one long, prosaic and monotonous apathy. Strictly ascetic, wan, pallid, undersized and subject to protracted spells of morbid moroseness, I was ostracised by the healthy, normal youngsters of my own age. They dubbed me a spoil sport, an "old woman", because I had no interest in the rough, childish games they played, or any stamina to participate in them, had I so desired.

Like all rural villages, Fenham had its quota of poison-tongued gossips. Their prying imaginations hailed my lethargic temperment as some abhorrent abnormality; they compared me with my parents and shook their heads in ominous doubt at the vast difference. Some of the more superstitious openly pronounced me a changling while others who knew something of my ancestry called attention to the vague mysterious rumors concerning a great-great-grand uncle who had been burned at the stake as a necromancer.

Had I lived in some larger town, with greater opportunities for congenial companionship, perhaps I could have overcome

this early tendency to be a recluse. As I reached my teens I grew even more sullen, morbid, and apathetic. My life lacked motivation. I seemed in the grip of something that dulled my senses, stunted my development, retarded my activities, and left me unaccountably dissatisfied.

I was sixteen when I attended my first funeral. A funeral in Fenham was a pre-eminent social event, for our town was noted for the longevity of its inhabitants. When, moreover, the funeral was that of such a well-known character as my grandfather, it was safe to assume that the townspeople would turn out *en masse* to pay due homage to his memory. Yet I did not view the approaching ceremony with even latent interest. Anything that tended to lift me out of my habitual inertia held for me only the promise of physical and mental disquietude. In deference to my parents' importunings, mainly to give myself relief from their caustic condemnations of what they chose to call my unfilial attitude, I agreed to accompany them.

There was nothing out of the ordinary about my grandfather's funeral unless it was the voluminous array of floral tributes; but this, remember, was my initiation to the solemn rites of such an occasion. Something about the darkened room, the oblong coffin with its somber drapings, the banked masses of fragrant blooms, the dolorous manifestations of the assembled villagers, stirred me from my normal listlessness and arrested my attention. Roused from my momentary reverie by a nudge from my mother's sharp elbow, I followed her across the room to the casket where the body of my grandparent laid.

For the first time I was face to face with Death. I looked down upon the calm placid face lined with its multitudinous wrinkles, and saw nothing to cause so much of sorrow. Instead, it seemed to me that grandfather was immeasurably content, blandly satisfied. I felt swayed by some strange discordant sense of elation. So slowly, so stealthily had it crept over me, that I could scarcely define its coming. As I mentally review that portentous hour it seems that it must have originated with my first glimpse of that funeral scene, silently strengthening its grip with subtle insidiousness. A baleful malignant influence that seemed to emanate from the corpse itself held me with magnetic fascination. My whole being seemed charged with some ecstatic electrifying force, and I felt my form straighten without conscious violation. My eyes were trying to burn beneath the closed lids

of the dead man's and read some secret message they concealed. My heart gave a sudden leap of unholy glee, and pounded against my ribs with demoniacal force as if to free itself from the confining walls of my frail frame. Wild, wanton, soul-satisfying sensuality engulfed me. One more the vigorous prod of a maternal elbow jarred me into activity. I had made my way to the sable-shrouded coffin with leaden tread; I walked away with new-found animation.

I accompanied the cortege to the cemetery, my whole physical being permeated with this mystic enlivening influence. It was as if I had quaffed deep draughts of some exotic elixir—some abominale concoction brewed from blasphemous formulae in the archives of Belial.

The townsfolk were so intent upon the ceremony that the radical change in my demeanor passed unnoticed by all save my father and my mother, but in the fortnight that followed, the village busybodies found fresh material for their vitriolic tongues in my altered bearing. At the end of the fortnight, however, the potency of the stimulus began to lose its effectiveness. Another day or two and I had completely reverted to my old-time langour, though not to the complete and engulfing insipidity of the past. Before, there had been an utter lack of desire to emerge from the enervation; now vague and indefinable unrest disturbed me. Outwardly I had become myself again, and the scandal-mongers turned to some more engrossing subject. Had they even so much as dreamed the true cause of my exhilaration they would have shunned me as if I were a filthy, leprous thing. Had I visioned the execrable power behind my brief period of elation I would have locked myself forever from the rest of the world and spent my remaining years in penitent solitude.

Tragedy often runs in trilogies, hence despite the proverbial longevity of our townspeople the next five years brought the death of both parents. My mother went first, in an accident of the most unexpected nature; and so genuine was my grief that I was honestly surprised to find its poignancy mocked and contradicted by that almost forgotten feeling of supreme and diabolical ecstasy. Once more my heart leaped wildly within me, once more it pounded at trip-hammer speed and sent the hot blood coursing through my veins with meteoric fervor. I shook from my shoulders the harassing cloak of stagnation only to replace it with the infinitely more horrible burden of loathsome, unhal-

lowed desire. I haunted the death-chamber where the body of my mother lay, my soul athirst for the devilish nectar that seemed to saturate the air of the darkened room. Every breath strengthened me, lifted me to towering heights of seraphic satisfaction. I knew, now, that it was but a sort of drugged delirium which must soon pass and leave me correspondingly weakened by its malign power, yet I could no more control my longing than I could untwist the Gordian knots in the already tangled skein of my destiny.

I knew, too, that through some strange satanic curse my life depended upon the dead for its motive force; that there was a singularity in my makeup which responded only to the awesome presence of some lifeless clod. A few days later, frantic for the bestial intoxicant on which the fulness of my existence depended, I interviewed Fenham's sole undertaker and talked him into taking me on as a sort of apprentice.

The shock of my mother's demise had visibly affected my father. I think that if I had broached the idea of such *outre* employment at any other time he would have been emphatic in his refusal. As it was he nodded acquiescence after a moment's sober thought. How little did I dream that he would be the object of my first practical lesson!

He, too, died suddenly; developing some hither-to unsuspected heart affliction. My octogenarian employer tried his best to dissuade me from the unthinkable task of embalming his body, nor did he detect the rapturous glint in my eyes as I finally won him over to my damnable point of view. I cannot hope to express the reprehensible, the unutterable thoughts that swept in tumultuous waves of passion through my racing heart as I labored over the lifeless clay. Unsurpassable love was the keynote of these concepts, a love greater—far greater—than any I had ever borne him while he was alive.

My father was not a rich man, but he had possessed enough of worldly goods to make him comfortably independent. As his sole heir I found myself in rather a paradoxical position. My early youth had totally failed to fit me for contact with the modern world, yet the primitive life of Fenham with its attendant isolation palled upon me. Indeed, the longevity of the inhabitants defeated my sole motive in arranging my indenture.

After settling the estate it proved an easy matter to secure my release and I headed for Bayboro, a city some fifty miles away.

Here my year of apprenticeship stood me in good stead. I had no trouble in establishing a favorable connection as an assistant with the Gresham Corporation, a concern that maintained the largest funeral parlors in the city. I even prevailed upon them to let me sleep upon the premises—for already the proximity of the dead was becoming an obsession.

I applied myself to my task with unwonted zeal. No case was too gruesome for my impious sensibilities, and I soon became master at my chosen vocation. Every fresh corpse brought into the establishment meant a fulfilled promise of ungodly gladness, of irreverent gratification; a return of that rapturous tumult of the arteries which transformed my grisly task into one of beloved devotion—yet every carnal satiation exacted its toll. I came to dread the days that brought no dead for me to gloat over, and prayed to all the obscene gods of the nethermost abysses to bring swift, sure death upon the residents of the city.

Then came the nights when a skulking figure stole surreptitously through the shadowy streets of the suburbs; pitch-dark nights when the midnight moon was obscured by heavy lowering clouds. It was a furtive figure that blended with the trees and cast fugitive glances over its shoulder; a figure bent on some malignant mission. After one of these prowlings the morning papers would scream to their sensation-mad clientele the details of some nightmare crime; column on column of lurid gloating over abominable atrocities; paragraph on paragraph of impossible solutions and extravagent, conflicting suspicions. Through it all I felt a supreme sense of security, for who would for a moment suspect an employee in an undertaking establishment, where Death was supposedly an every-day affair, of seeking surcease from unnamable urgings in the cold-blooded slaughter of his fellow-beings? I planned each crime with maniacal cunning, varying the manner of my murders so that no one would even dream that all were the work of one blood-stained pair of hands. The aftermath of each nocturnal venture was an ecstatic hour of pleasure, pernicious and unalloyed; a pleasure always heightened by the chance that its delicious source might later be assigned to my gloating administrations in the course of my regular occupation. Sometimes that double and ultimate pleasure did occur—O rare and delicious memory!

During long nights when I clung close to the shelter of my sanctuary, I was prompted by the mausoleum silence to devise

new and unspeakable ways of lavishing my affections upon the dead that I loved—the dead that gave me life!

One morning Mr. Gresham came much earlier than usual—came to find me stretched out upon a cold slab deep in ghoulish slumber, my arms wrapped about the stark, stiff, naked body of a fetid corpse! He roused me from my salacious dreams, his eyes filled with mingled detesation and pity. Gently but firmly he told me that I must go, that my nerves were unstrung, that I needed a long rest from the repellent tasks my vocation required, that my impressionable youth was too deeply affected by the dismal atmosphere of my environment. How little did he know of the demoniacal desires that spurred me on in my disgusting infirmities! I was wise enough to see that argument would only strengthen his belief in my potential madness—it was far better to leave than to invite discovery of the motive underlying my actions.

After this I dared not stay long in one place for fear some overt act would bare my secret to an unsympathetic world. I drifted from city to city, from town to town. I worked in morgues, around cemeteries, once in a crematory—anywhere that afforded me an opportunity to be near the dead that I so craved.

Then came the world war. I was one of the first to go across, one of the last to return. Four years of blood-red charnel Hell . . . Sickening slime of rain rotten trenches . . . deafening bursting of hysterical shells . . . monotonous droning of sardonic bullets . . . smoking frenzies of Phlegethon's fountains . . . stifling fumes of murderous gases . . . grotesque remnants of smashed and shredded bodies . . . four years of transcendent satisfaction.

In every wanderer there is a latent urge to return to the scenes of his childhood. A few months later found me making my way through the familiar byways of Fenham. Vacant dilapidated farm houses lined the adjacent roadsides, while the years had brought equal retrogression to the town itself. A mere handful of the houses were occupied, but among these was the one I had once called home. The tangled, weed-choked driveway, the broken window panes, the uncared-for acres that stretched behind, all bore mute confirmation of the tales that guarded inquiries had elicited—that it now sheltered a dissolute drunkard who eked out a meager existence from the chores his few neighbors gave him out of sympathy for the mistreated wife and under-

nourished child who shared his lot. All in all, the glamour surrounding my youthful environment was entirely dispelled; so, prompted by some errant foolhardy thought, I next turned my steps toward Bayboro.

Here, too, the years had brought changes, but in reverse order. The small city I remembered had almost doubled in size despite its wartime depopulation. Instinctively I sought my former place of employment, finding it still there but with an unfamiliar name and "Successor to" above the door, for the influenza epidemic had claimed Mr. Gresham, while the boys were overseas. Some fateful mood impelled me to ask for work. I referred to my tutelage under Mr. Gresham with some trepidation, but my fears were groundless—my late employer had carried the secret of my unethical conduct with him to the grave. An opportune vacancy insured my immediate re-installation.

Then came vagrant haunting memories of scarlet nights of impious pilgrimages, and an uncontrollable desire to renew those illicit joys. I cast caution to the winds and launched upon another series of damnable debaucheries. Once more the yellow sheets found welcome material in the devilish details of my crimes, comparing them to the red weeks of horror that had appalled the city years before. Once more the police sent out their dragnet and drew into its enmeshing folds—nothing!

My thirst for the noxious nectar of the dead grew to a consuming fire, and I began to shorten the periods between my odious exploits. I realized that I was treading on dangerous ground, but demoniac desire gripped me in its torturing tenacles and urged me on.

All this time my mind was becoming more and more benumbed to any influence except the satiation of my insane longings. Little details vitally important to one bent on such evil escapades escaped me. Somehow, somewhere, I left a vague trace, an elusive clue, behind—not enough to warrant my arrest, but sufficient to turn the tide of suspicion in my direction. I sensed this espionage, yet was helpless to stem the surging demand for more dead to quicken my enervated soul.

Then came the night when the shrill whistle of the police roused me from my fiendish gloating over the body of my latest victim, a gory razor still clutched tightly in my hand. With one dexterous motion I closed the blade and thrust it into the pocket of the coat I wore. Night-sticks beat a lusty tattoo upon the

door. I crashed the window with a chair, thanking Fate I had chosen one of the cheaper tenement districts for my locale. I dropped into a dingy alley as blue-coated forms burst through the shattered door. Over shaky fences, through filthy back yards, past squalid ramshackle houses, down dimly-lighted narrow streets I fled. I thought at once of the wooded marshes that lay beyond the city and stretched for half a hundred miles till they touched the outskirts of Fenham. If I could reach this goal I would be temporarily safe. Before dawn I was plunging headlong through the foreboding wasteland, stumbling over the rotting roots of half-dead trees whose naked branches stretched out like grotesque arms striving to encumber me with mocking embraces.

The imps of the nefarious gods to whom I offered my idolatrous prayers must have guided my footsteps through that menacing morass. A week later wan, bedraggled, and emaciated, I lurked in the woods a mile from Fenham. So far I had eluded my pursuers, yet I dared not show myself, for I knew that the alarm must have been sent broadcast. I vaguely hoped I had thrown them off the trail. After that first frenetic night I had heard no sound of alien voices, no crashing of heavy bodies through the underbrush. Perhaps they had concluded that my body lay hidden in some stagnant pool or had vanished forever in the tenacious quagmire.

Hunger gnawed at my vitals with poignant pangs, thirst left my throat parched and dry. Yet far worst was the unbearable hunger of my starving soul for the stimulus I found only in the nearness of the dead. My nostrils quivered in sweet recollection. No longer could I delude myself with the thought that this desire was a mere whim of the heated imagination. I knew now that it was an integral part of life itself; that without it I should burn out like an empty lamp. I summoned all my remaining energy to fit me for the task of satisfying my accursed appetite. Despite the peril attending my move I set out to reconoiter, skirting the sheltering shadows like an obscene wraith. Once more I felt that strange sensation of being led by some unseen satellite of Satan. Yet even my sin-steeped soul revolted for a moment when I found myself before my native abode, the scene of my youthful hermitage.

Then these disquieting memories faded. In their place came overwhelming lustful desire. Behind the rotting walls of this

old house lay my prey. A moment lated I had raised one of the shattered window and climbed over the sill. I listened for a moment, every sense alert, every muscle tensed for action. The silence reassured me. With cat-like tread I stole through the familiar rooms until stertorous snores indicated the place where I was to find surcease from my sufferings. I allowed myself a sigh of anticipated ecstasy as I pushed open the door of the bedchamber. Panther-like I made my way to the supine form stretched out in drunken stupor. The wife and child—where were they?—well, they could wait. My clutching fingers groped for his throat.

Hours later I was again the fugitive, but a new-found stolen strength was mine. Three silent forms slept to wake no more. It was not until the garish light of day penetrated my hiding-place that I visualized the certain consequences of my rashly purchased relief. By this time the bodies must have been discovered. Even the most obtuse of the rural police must surely link the tragedy with my flight from the nearby city. Besides, for the first time I had been careless enough to leave some tangible proof of my identity—my fingerprints on the throats of the newly dead. All day I shivered in nervous apprehension. The mere crackling of a dry twig beneath my feet conjured mental images that appalled me. That night under cover of the protecting darkness I skirted Fenham and made for the woods that lay beyond. Before dawn came the first definite hint of renewed pursuit—the distant baying of hounds.

Through the long night I pressed on, but by morning I could feel my artificial strength ebbing. Noon brought once more the insistent call of the contaminating curse, and I knew I must fall by the way unless I could once more experience that exotic intoxication that came only with the proximity of the loved dead. I had traveled in a wide semicircle. If I pushed steadily ahead, midnight would bring me to the cemetery where I had laid away my parents years before. My only hope, I felt certain, lay in reaching this goal before I was overtaken. With silent prayer to the devils that dominated my destiny I turned leaden feet in the direction of my last stronghold.

God! Can it be that a scant twelve hours have passed since I started for my ghostly sanctuary? I have lived an eternity in each leaden hour. But I have reached a rich reward. The

noxious odors of this neglected spot are frankincense to my suffering soul!

The first streaks of dawn are graying the horizon. They are coming! My sharp ears catch the far-off howling of the dogs! It is but a matter of minutes before they find me and shut me away forever from the rest of the world, to spend my days in ravaging yearnings till at last I join the dead I love!

They shall not take me! A way of escape is open! A coward's choice, perhaps, but better—far better—than endless months of nameless misery. I will leave this record behind me that some soul may perhaps understand why I make this choice.

The razor! It has nestled forgotten in my pocket since my flight from Bayboro. Its blood-stained blade gleams oddly in the waning light of the thin-edged moon. One slashing stroke across my left wrist and deliverance is assured . . .

Warm, fresh blood spatters grotesque patterns on dingy, decrepit slabs . . . phantasmal hordes swarm over the rotting graves . . . spectral fingers beckon me . . . ethereal fragments of unwritten melodies rise in celesteial crescendo . . . distant stars dance drunkenly in demoniac accompaniment . . . a thousand tiny hammers beat hideous dissonances on anvils inside my chaotic brain . . . gray ghosts of slaughtered spirits parade in mocking silence before me . . . scorched tongues of invisible flame sear the brand of Hell upon my sickened soul . . . I can—write—no—more. . . .

ON THE MOUNT OF STONE

In rock-bound Arabia
Grows the myrrh and cassia
Lost altars burned to Alilat,
And spices that
The phoenix gathered for his pyre.
Laurel-leaves and laurel-blooms,
Dreams and blood, and flowers
Dropped by Hermes-footed hours,
Feed the fire
Wherein my love consumes
On the mount of stone, and springs
Renewed with young auroral wings.

HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT

by SAMUEL LOVEMAN

American literature has produced three great writers of terror fiction: Edgar Allan Poe, Ambrose Bierce and Howard Phillips Lovecraft. It has been my good fortune—certainly, no inconsiderable one—to have been on intimate terms with two of these: Ambrose Bierce and Howard Phillips Lovecraft.

It is now nearly thirty years ago that I received a letter. Fantastically worded and written in an obsolete style that simulated the early 1700's, with meticulously-rounded sentences that made me hover (as I read) between sheer envy and downright laughter. I remember the inscription at the close: "I remain, dear Sir, your Most Humble, Obedient Servant, Howard Phillip Lovecraft, Esquire." The gist of the letter was this: the writer had long been an ardent admirer of my poetry, and its appearance had, from time to time excited his admiration to such a degree, that he had made bold to institute inquiries as to my whereabouts. He had, he asserted, practically given up any hope of finding me, when a clue to my location was indicated. Hence, his letter of inquiry: was I alive or dead? Would I write to him if I were still in the land of the living? I had always been a legend to him—could I, or rather would I, remove his doubts?

I removed them. Letters were exchanged and flew back and forth between us. I have never been a good letter-writer and the demands that Lovecraft made upon his correspondents, were prodigious as well as extraordinary. A letter of a single page on one side, could (and usually did) evoke an answer of from forty to fifty closely-written pages. They were wonderful letters—marvelously readable, astonishingly erudite, incredibly human. Their range of subjects was monumental: Astronomy, Sorcery, Witchcraft, Archaeology, English Literature, Cabalism, Dutch New York, 18th Century Poetry, Alexander Pope, Roman Sculpture, Greek Vases, Decadence of the Alexandrian Period, Baths of Caracalla, T. S. Eliot, Hart Crane—heaven alone could enumerate their infinite range and breath-taking variety! They were written with a verbal abundance and a feeling for prose construction, that the best of us might well envy. Lovecraft was a stickler for grammer and syntax.

The upshot of it was that we arranged to meet in New York, to visit the very beautiful woman who was later to become Howard's wife. She was (let this be affirmed for once and for all) the very soul of loyalty, graciousness and lavish generosity. We occupied her apartment near Prospect Park in Brooklyn, while she removed herslf nightly to sleep in a neighbor's rooms on the same floor. The long evenings of conversation between the three of us, the endless discussions as to what was and what was not permissable in good writing, the timelessness of everything, are phases of my visit that I keenly recollect—with a little shiver over the passing of years—it seems all so long ago. Howard's conversation was without boundaries, on any subject. I have never known him to hold the slightest resentment against any one; I have never known a human being to secrete less envy, malice, morbidity and intolerance, than did Howard. Toward the worst of rascals or scoundrelism, there was not a single line of remonstrance. "Only another arrangement of chemical molecules," he was wont to ascribe toward any persons malingering in the long and particularly fine range of his lifelong friendships or acquaintances. His sense of irony as well as his projection of quiet humor with an occasional jet of ambient and satirical badinage, was complete.

He visited me in Cleveland, where I procured a room for him close to where I lived. There were wonderful walks at night and a marvellously brilliant but solid exchange of conversations. I had, in Cleveland, become the friend of Hart Crane, and it is one of the singular occurences among not a few in my life, that these two men of genius met on a personal basis. Neither cared for the other. Crane demoded Lovecraft as old-fashioned and the soul of pedantry; Lovecraft, on the other hand, sardonically and not without mimicry, disparaged Crane's modernity as well as his morality. Both settled with tolerance for one another, during an entire evening devoted to a corruscating glorification of the heavenly cosmogany; Lovecraft's knowledge of astronomy was phenomenal. It was in Cleveland that Howard confided to me that he had long since visited the battlefield at Lexington, in company with our friend, James Ferdinand Morton, Jr., grandson of the composer of *My Country 'tis of Thee.*

"Were you stirred to patriotism over your visit to this hallowed spot?" I asked.

"Yes," he responded, "I was—but not in the direction that

you would imagine. When James Ferdinand and I stood before the graves of the Revolutionary soldier who had been the first to fall on this memorable and lamentable occasion, I bared and bowed my head. 'So perish all enemies and traitors to his Majesty, King George the Third!' I cried."

"Rubbish!" I commented, "Did you really feel that way?"

"I did, and most profoundly," he announced with fervor. "Our severance from the British Dominion has been the head of a long line of cataclysmic disasters. I am a Tory, sir! I still declare my everlasting and loyal allegiance to England, God bless her!" He meant it.

Lovecraft's stay in New York, after the separation from his wife (a tragedy to those who knew the inside of the affair), was one of complete rebellion against everything that the huge city had to offer. He hated the noise, the interminable rudeness of the inhabitants, the rowdy and rancid slums. He confided to me a way that he had found of reaching the New York Public Library at the corner of 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue (his favorite haunt)—without so much as exposing himself or walking more than a dozen feet, up the marble library steps from the subway nearby. He declaimed with flushed cheeks and a rising voice against (so he called it) "the mixed mongrel population—the very scum and dregs of Europe and the Near East," that filled and permeated the area of the entire city. He anticipated with a heart-breaking intensity and longing that only his closest friends knew—a liberation and return to New England—back to his beloved Providence with its antique gables and narrow streets, to the Colonial reconstruction of what is now known to the readers of his weird fiction as "Arkham country".

It was only at night that Lovecraft actually began to live. Then it was that we had long walks together, in and out of the dusky thoroughfares of lower New York, ending up in a state of somnolent and dreamy contentment, on a park-bench in leafy Washington Square. Howard's faculty for searching and ferreting out old houses that had originally been Colonial in spite of the multiplicity of their modern architectural alterations—was truly amazing. He loved every line, every angle of the 17th and 18th centuries. A visit we made to Salem, Marblehead and Boston, remains indelibly fixed in my memory. Salem we did at sunset, and the memory of a pause in our

long tramp, lingering for a few moments at the foot of Witch Hill, while Lovecraft conjured up—across a black sky streaked with sinister scarlet—the row of imaginary gibbets and the fury of the demoniacal populace silhouetted across the horizon, are unforgetable. Marblehead, he knew and loved. For the fortunate companion who accompanied him to Boston, it may be affirmed that he became a veritable guide-book.

These few, slight notes would be sadly incomplete without some scattered references to Howard's procedure and method in his process of weird-story writing. He wrote rapidly and without effort. *The Shunned House,* of which I have the original manuscript, tells the tale of easy, fluent writing. His own work he spoke of lightly and even disparagingly, without the slightest conception of its lasting quality. The ego that stimulates many of us to write or create, was—in his instance—entirely absent. "Much that I have written, I have dreamed," he once confided to me. *"The Statement of Randolph Carter,* was altogether a dream. You," he said to me, "were 'Harley Warren' in that story. I dreamed of a huge and ancient graveyard filled with tombs, and the marble graves as old as eternity, with crawling ivy underfoot, and each mouldering slab covered by a growth of green moss and evil lichen. And as I strolled through those ominous precincts, I became aware of a voice that called me. Impelled by fear and urged through sheer horror, I made my way to the one grave that seemed to open and yawn with flaring, blinding lights before me, the voice—your voice—calling—calling . . . I descended and followed the voice, the voice that was yours, into the hollow obscurity of that unspeakable grave!"

A visit to Providence and a walk at midnight to the scene of *The Shunned House* near his own home with Lovecraft, still brings the thrill that it brought to me so many years ago. "You shall see it," he announced, after we had decided to visit the spot of his finest creation in terror. "It isn't so far off," he continued. "Directly across is the little graveyard where Sarah Helen Whitman walked with Edgar Allan Poe, which adjoins the house she lived in. He courted her in that uncanny but romantic place." So shortly after midnight we sallied forth (the phrase seems apropos) and made our way by brilliant moonlight to Howard's original of *The Shunned House.* "It is owned by a retired, wealthy bachelor," he confided, "who no longer

lives in it." "And this place," I queried, "held the incredible, intolerable horror of your tale?" "Unquestionably," he replied humorously. "There are those," he added with a sinister intonation, "who say *the end is not yet!*" I stood and surveyed the solid, frame building, opaquely silent, with windows barred and shuttered, the old roof flooded with clear moonlight. "And now," he announced, "we must walk down into the graveyard where Sarah Helen Whitman became affianced to Edgar Allan Poe." I followed with no little misgiving. The path was devious, rugged and winding. It slipped down the dark hill where Providence lay like a cup of silver in the vague and misty valley below. "Anything could happen here," I muttered with some misgiving. Howard jeered at me not unkindly. "Nothing ever does," he replied rapidly with emphasis. "The conjurations that the brain has given forth, have bred all the misbegotten superstition and errant bigotry of witchcraft and miracle-mongering down the long and dusty ages. Science is true and irrefutable. Look at the stars above you!" He began to talk astronomy It had become freezing cold and the stars continued to glitter like so many diamonds, as we ascended the hill to the house where Lovecraft lived. He was in high humor, demurring over what he considered the early hour we were forced to retire. At five the next morning we left for Boston.

A LETTER TO E. HOFFMANN PRICE

by H. P. Lovecraft

February 15, 1933

Dear Malik:

I thought le Comte d'Erlette's opus would give you quite a reaction! What the kid has done is to get at those subtle, unheeded impressions which we take for granted when they come, but which really contain so much of the universal that they pack a tremendous symbolic wallop when they crop out in later years. It's no easy job to single out such things and serve them up in such a way that they evoke parallel personal impressions in the minds of myriad readers—but I think M. Auguste-Guillaume has done it—just as Marcel Proust did it. And that is art. D'Erlette has mastered the mechanism, as it were, of the experience-savoring and experience-recalling processes—he knows

the right things to select, and the right way and tempo in which to put them across. The reader, swept into the rhythm of these processes in *Evening in Spring,** finds that rhythm eventually at work in his own head—utilizing his own experience-material instead of the author's.

* *Evening in Spring,* here referred to, is an earlier version of the book later published by Charles Scribner's Sons, and subsequently reprinted by Stanton & Lee. It was the custom of many members of the Lovecraft circle, particularly those of us who were younger, to send anything we thought unusual we had done around to the more experienced members of the group for comment and criticism. Frequently, as in the case of the present letter, Lovecraft's reading of mss. brought forth the evocation of his own memories in memorable fashion. Few letters contain such a well-rounded sensory impression of Lovecraft's native Providence.

My own nature and childhood differ diametrically from d'Erlette's, and yet his methods cause the early years and their impressions to come back vividly to me. I, though, find the nature sections—or in general, the sections devoted to broad impersonal impressions of landscape, architecture, atmospheric effects, etc.—far more vivid than those dealing with personalities and human relationships. This, because I have always been tremendously sensitive to the *general visual scene*—external, objective, mysterious and full of potential cosmic suggestion—while relatively indifferent to people. I can never feel the poignancy of human affairs as keenly as I can feel the poignancy of dim vistas suggesting wonders of time, space, and the unknown on a stupendous and non-human scale—so that some of Steve's effusiveness and sentimentality about people seems to me like downright slobbering. However, I know opposite types well enough to appreciate the skill and fidelity of all d'Erlette's delineations—and consequently to admire the artistry inherent in them. The little rascal certainly has the real stuff! The rural side gets under my skin because I always *knew* the ancient fields and hills and groves even though a city dweller.

The house where I was born and grew up (about a mile southeast of 10 Barnes) was near the edge of the built-up streets when I was very small, and it was only a stone's throw to the rolling, stone-walled meadows, trim white farmhouses, rambling barns and byres, gnarled old orchards, dim twilight woods, and ravine-pierced river-bluffs of primative colonial New England. Like d'Erlette, I wandered fascinatedly through that mystical,

flower-fragrant elder world and formed all sorts of imaginative impressions from it—but there the resemblance ends. For while he was an *intrinsic* naturalist like Wordsworth—sensuously content with the visible and unexplained beauty around him—I was the exact opposite: a confirmed and inveterate *associationist* who constantly linked the lovely countryside with everything in the past which folklore and reading had brought to me. I peopled the landscape with the gods, fawns, and dryads of antique Hellas, or with the castles and witch-cottages of fairy lore—or else dreamed them back into their own past and lived fancifully in bygone centuries. I twisted all reality to conform to what I had been reading—often making Old England's gnarled oaks out of New England's maples, and so on. Today the built-up city has swallowed a great part of my childhood countryside, though some of the choicest bits are providentially saved by being parts of the Metropolitan Park System. Thus I can still wander along the ancient wooded river-bank (as I do, with black bag full of reading and writing matter, each pleasant summer afternoon) and find nothing changed since my earliest infancy.

Like d'Erlette, I was also sensitive to the mystery-fraught streets and huddled roofs of the town, and often took rambles in unfamiliar sections for the sake of bizarre atmospheric and architectual effects—ancient gables and chimneys under varied conditions of light and mist, etc. I always sought the *oldest* sections, where centuries of continuous life had left the most deposits, and thus formed my lifelong love for colonial houses and vistas—Vieux Carre stuff. This of course, d'Erlette could never get in his village—although he would probably have been rhapsodic about Old Providence.

Good old Providence—there is no other town quite like it! Though a centre of hundreds of thousands, it has kept an archaic, village-like quality which will never die, and which was even more marked in my youth than now. The town lies at the head of the bay, with the flat business section stretching westward on largely "made" land whilst the residence district climbs an almost perpendicular and incredibly picturesque hill just east of the shore line. The steepness of this hill (on whose crest I now dwell) has defied the spread of commerce and change, so that its narrow lanes, ancient steeples, rows of fanlighted doorways and railed double flights of steps, huddled gables, courtyard archways, walled gardens, occasional bits of actual

grass-grown lane and farmyard, and countless other details, remain to a surprising extent as they were in the middle 18th century—before most of the houses in New Orleans' Vieux Carre were built. There is a 1761 colony-house, a 1770 college edifice, a 1769 schoolhouse, a 1763 newspaper office, a 1775 church, a 1773 market house, and so on . . . and so on . .. And up to a recent time (curse the vandalism which destroyed the best part of it as recently at 1929) the ancient waterfront with slant-roofed brick warehouses and lanes of gambrel-roofed shops and pillared taverns was virtually the same as in the days of the African-Caribbean "triangular trade" (rum, niggers, and molasses) and the great East India brigs.

Then, too, from most points along the hill crest there is a breath-taking view of the outspread roofs and spires and domes of the westward-stretching lower town—a view reaching even to the dim violet hills of the country beyond—the country whence many of my ancestors came. At sunset this vista is past description—the marble domes of the State House, the Gothic tower of St. Patrick's, and the distant spires of Federal Hill against the flaming, mysterious west—and then the cryptic twilight, with the violet of the far hills creeping eastward to engulf the whole drowsy valley, and little specks of light leaping out one by one till the expanded sea of roofs is one titanic constellation . . . Great stuff! And even more magical now that we have tall buildings (15, 16, 26 stories) to light up and suggest enchanted cliff cities of Dunsanian mystery. Good old Providence!

The glamourous 18th century part begins at the original shore street at the foot of the precipice and climbs just over the top—with a few tongues reaching beyond the crest and inland along the gently-downward-sloping plateau. Adjacent to this are the early-, mid-, and later-Victorian layers. 10 Barnes, alas, is Victorian—but it's only three houses from the ancient section, which begins with a 200-year-old white farmhouse (old farmhouses imbedded in the heart of the engulfing city—like the Windtfelt house at 1st and Prytania or the Delord-Sorpy plantation house at Camp and Howard in New Orleans—and a distinctive Providence feature) still situated in the midst of its picket-fenced old-fashioned garden. Just around the corner is the plendid brick Halsey mansion built in 1801 and reputed to be *haunted,* while my whole walk down town (zigzagging along the precipice and

traversing an old-world street which is partly a flight of steps) extends through Georgian byways and past centuried steeples and courtyards and belfries. My birthplace—at the edge of the town in the 1890's—is of course in a solid Victorian neighborhood—which made the strongly contrasted ancient hill section doubly fascinating to me in infancy. There was even a kind of faint, subtle *terror* mixed with the fascination, as if the ancient hill represented something obscurely *underlying and eternal,* whilst the newer sections represented a kind of flimsy dream out of which one might easily awake. I *still* get this sensation at times. The hill and its centuried gables seemed to me one with the ancient fields and farms and forests that stretched eastward to the river.

Pardon the rambling—but that's the way *Evening in Spring* sets one off. I also felt that kinship with *ancestors,* rather than the generation just preceding, which d'Erlette points out. My maternal grandfather—born in 1833—and his generation seemed much closer to me than the generation of my parents, uncles, and aunts, born around the 1860's; while my forebears in the 18*th century* (periwigged Devonshire squires and rural Anglican vicars on my father's side, and New-England planters on my mother's side) seemed closest of all. That sense of immediate personal kinship with the 18th century—its costume, architecture, literary style, thought, etc.—has never left me or even diminished. It's that which sends me rambling around the country looking for Vieux Carre's and Charlestons and Natchezes and Salems and Annapolises and Quebecs!

Well—I tried once to put my imaginative reactions to old Providence into a story, but don't think I succeeded very well. It was a 150 page novelette—*The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* (Whose imaginary home was the old haunted Halsey mansion around the corner from here)—which I wrote in the winter of 1926-27, but which I could never get the energy to type. Today little Barlow has offered to type it for me in exchange for the ms., but I'm not sure that it's good enough to save. I must trot it out and look it over.

Getting back to the theme—I don't believe the residue of *Evening in Spring* will disappoint you. It's solid material—and if I'm any prophet, young Comte d'Erlette will be one of the solid recognized writers of the next decade.

Best wishes, H. P. L.

OLD WIVES' TALE

by Leah Bodine Drake

She went to the moor in the honey-coloured twilight
to pick wild rushes under a rising moon.
But she had forgotten that the elfin-rings
were green on the Ancient Mound,
and that goat-hooved things
piped by the marshy pool.
When we told her what night it was
and what herd-girls had seen
up on that moor of old, at moon-rise,
she said still one must pull certain herbs
in the moon's hour,
when roots fill with sleep-inducing power
from that white fiery orb.
She said nothing was there to fear,
she could walk undaunted
by any sound she might hear,
for the clever ones tell that now the moor is unhaunted
and no enchantment lingers
on upland or fell,
even on Walburga's Eve. She said
that siren and troll have fled
and night is shriven of all unnatural dangers.
So we let her go,
small and dark against the afterglow,
away from our warning talk,
and some of us felt like fools as we turned our faces
toward the farms and the paths we know
and the unwitched places.
In the dawn a herd with her flock
found a basket tumbled
on the slope of the Ancient Mound,
and a rabbiting boy stumbled home
and told in a voice that was hoarse with fear,
how he had seen
a torn shoe lying in a patch of gorse,
and beside the marsh
the prints of enormous hooves
in the swart, wet loam.

STRANGERS FROM HESPERUS

by NORMAN MARKHAM

Since the time of the Bolshevist revolution at the end of World War I, the countries not involved in the revolution have had a tendency to look upon Russia with suspicion. Let any strange occurence he reported which defies explanation, and immediately Russia is blamed—especially if the occurence seems menacing.

In 1921 (see *The New York Times Index*: March-July 1921: under *Accidents*: *Shipping*) a number of ships of all nationalities vanished off the north Atlantic. One of these ships, the *Albyan,* was a Russian vessel. These disappearances, more than a dozen of which took place during the short space of a few weeks, never have been explained. At the time, the unproven assertion was made that Soviet ships were stealing them.

In the wnter of 1933-34 (*The New York Times,* December-February, 1933-34) strange aircraft whose origin was said to have been Russian were seen for several weeks over a territory extending from Lapland to southeastern Finland. These planes flew at night and bore lights. But though it was said that these were Soviet craft, observers were unable to identify them. They vanished, or report on them stopped around the first of February, 1934. There was an inferior conjunction of Venus on February 5, 1934. The epidemic of vanishing ships in 1921 stopped with the disappearance of the *Canadian Maid* which left Monte Cristo for New York on April 24, 1921. Inferior conjunction of Venus took place on April 22, 1921. At the time of inferior conjunction, Venus is at its closest to earth. These times are about 584 days apart.

Though Russia denied having dispatched the "ghost airplanes" of 1933-34, it would have done that nation no good to deny the "ghost rockets" of 1946. From some time in July until August and later that year, there were many reports from Sweden, Norway and Denmark on spool-shaped and spindle-shaped things, vomiting fire, which streaked at rocket-like speed through the sky. In spite of the fact that it would have been sheer folly for any country to be carrying on experiments in rocketry under conditions where, because of military censorship in the target-countries, the results could not be known, Russia was blamed for sending rockets. Some of these rockets sailed on courses which appeared to be arcs of circles. These rockets

ceased to be reported after September, 1946. Inferior conjunction of Venus occurred on November 17, 1946.

The suggestion that Russia might have been availing herself of the dates of inferior conjunction of Venus in order that these appearances should be attributed to that planet is hardly tenable; few people on earth are likely to look for such a periodicity and association, primarily because, for the most part, people are convinced on the basis of negative evidence alone, that no life exists on our sister planets.

Three months after the inferior conjunction of November 27, 1914, something reminiscent of the 1946 "rockets" was reported from the Chusan Archipelago, a group of islands off the Chinese coast near Foochow, (*Nature,* 97-16). "An extremely interesting account of a great meteor seen over the Chusan Archipelago during the forenoon of February 13, 1915, has been given by Captain W. F. Tyler, R.N.R., in a paper communicated to the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (*Journals,* Volume XLVI). Captain Tyler's attention was drawn to the matter by the report of the light-keeper at Steep Island that a man-o-war had fired an aerial torpedo which almost struck the tower. The combined observations from a number of adjacent islands and from Shanghai seem to be best fitted by assuming the meteor to have followed a strongly curved path, at first traveling a little east of north, and finally moving toward the southeast. The meteor was seen to fall into the water near Video Island, and a violent explosion was heard over a wide area.

Noteworthily, this thing was called an "aerial torpedo" which is much the same as calling it a "rocket". Its appearance very likely suggested the terminology. When it was later ascertained that the "torpedo" did not issue from any known source, it was called a "meteor". The Bolshevist revolution had not yet then taken place, which may account for Russia's not having been blamed for the Steep Island "meteor".

We have recently had a number of reports on "flying discs" or "saucers". It is not known what these things are. Many have claimed to have seen them. There is no good reason to disregard the published observation of Kenneth Arnold, who first put them into the news, and of Captain E. J. Smith of the United Airlines who, together with his co-pilot and stewardess, claim to have seen the discs. There are more reports than these which seem acceptable. While hysteria unquestionably added

many false reports to the record, it is nonetheless acceptable that many did see circular objects which were highly polished and traveling at very great speeds. Whatever these objects were, they flew faster than any aircraft so far invented. John W. Campbell, Jr., editor of *Astounding Science-Fiction,* comments: "They weren't products of a foreign domestic power. Anybody having a plane that good would darned well keep it to himself—until he meant to use it! The same applies to a United States Government device; they'd have been test-flown off some small Pacific island, where none but a few selected personnel, plus a few thousand fish, would have been around to report. That would mean a fair chance that they were being piloted by visitors from outside." (*Astounding Science-Fiction,* Volume XL, Number 2). Further, they seem to have been driven by some unknown, probably unguessable means of propulsion. Most reports on them indicate they made no sound in flight. After they had been in the news for a few weeks, other witnesses came forward to tell of earlier appearances of them.

The United States Army has investigated reports that at Manitou, Colorado, one noon during May, 1947, some employees of the Pikes Peak & Manitou (cog) railroad saw some object which maneuvered above Pikes Peak. By description it was like the "flying saucers". A Japanese business-man, Tomoyo Okado, of Tokyo, said that during B-29 raids on Tokyo on May 23 and 25, 1945, he and others had seen something like "flying pancakes" which had cruised at "taxicab speed" in the sky the bombers had recently vacated. In Denver, a Belgian war-bride, Mrs. Emmett Cagley, who had recently come to the United States, said that in February, 1947, the discs had made their appearance in Belgium. She claims to have seen them, and says the same furore had greeted their appearance as met them here—the same doubts and attributions to popular hysteria and pratical joking. The Associated Press duly reported Tomoyo Okado's story under a Tokyo dispatch date-lined July 12, 1947, and Mrs. Cagley's story appeared in *The Rocky Mountain News* of Denver, July 7, 1947. Quite as though the reports on discs follow a system of some kind, we find that their Tokyo appearance took place about one month after inferior conjunction of Venus on April 15, 1945; that the appearance in Belgium occurred in the neighborhood of three months after inferior conjunction of that planet, on November 17, 1946.

It is not known for certain what the surface of Venus is like. The planet is covered by clouds. That Venus is some 24,000,000 miles from earth at inferior conjunction, or at its closest, means little for the purposes of space travel, when that shall be achieved. According to Hohman, Ley and Richardson and others who have concerned themselves about the future of space travel, the cheapest and longest trip from here to Venus would be in an 180-degree orbit of 146 days travel-time, with the possibility that if hyperbolic orbits were used, the trip would be negotiated in only twelve days. Within the past forty years, men have come to dream mathematically of reaction-driven flights to other planets. But there have been published from time to time accounts which make it seem as if other entities, living elsewhere than on earth, had long ago beaten us to space flight.

There have been occurences which provide us with reason to think that there is a possibility, however remote, that outsiders come here to mine the floors of the oceans. The "black rains" of Slains, Scotland, which took place in the 1860's, is a case in point. Two of them were accompanied by great floes of furnace slag which washed up on the Scottish coast near Slains. In the opinion of James Rust (*Scottish Showers*) the quantity of slag produced would have required the output of all the furnaces in the world. It is not known to this writer which of the black rains was accompanied by the appearances of the slag, but those black rains did show a decided affinity for inferior conjunction of Venus. Where then, did so much slag come from? Did outsiders smelt ores in their space-ships and dump the slag into the ocean? Did they work on the ocean-floor? One can speculate freely.

For speculative purposes, it might be considered that an older culture somewhere outside had long ago depleted its planetary resources and is obliged to go elsewhere from time to time to find mineral raw material, metals, and the like. It can be assumed that the reason they have not been caught at work is that they perform their basic work on the sea-bottom. Space-ships, being necessarily hermetically sealed, could function as submersibles if equipped with ballast tanks, and if strongly enough constructed.

We hastily blame these curious appearances on any "whipping boy" handy to our purposes; currently it is the vogue to lay such things at Russia's door. We may be overlooking a series of phenomena of the most interesting character and of the highest

and most personal significance to all of us. Suppose we do some day succeed in building space-craft—that is, if in stupid haste to kill one another with our marvelous but insanely-conceived weapons we do not annul the possibility forever—and suppose the phenomena we call "ghost airplanes", "ghost rockets", "flying saucers" are actually devices operated by outsiders? Such outsiders would unquestionably be of the highest advancement, with the possibility of being not only scientifically but sociologically superior to us.

Would we not be risking a frightful fate if we blundered out into space — even as our early conquistadores and explorers blundered on to this continent—and instead of meeting easily robbed and cheated aborigines, ran into something with the terrible teeth and claws of an intelligence more highly developed than our own? Remember what happened when the peaceful mathematician, Archimedes, was trapped at Syracuse and the formidable weapons that were spawned by his genius. It may be well to look outside before we open the door. If the appearances cited correspond too well with conjunctions of Venus, there could be a great civilization on that planet.

FURTHER WEST COUNTRY LEGENDS

Collected by ROBERT HUNT

THE PARSON AND THE CLERK

Near Dawlish stand, out in the sea, two rocks, of red sandstone conglomerate to which the above name is given.

Seeing that this forms a part of Old Cornwall, I do not go beyond my limits in telling the true story of these singular rocks.

The Bishop of Exeter was sick unto death at Dawlish. An ambitious priest, from the east, frequently rode with his clerk to make anxious inquiries after the condition of the dying bishop. It is whispered that this priest had great hopes of occupying the bishop's throne in Exeter Cathedral.

The clerk was usually the priest's guide; but somehow or other, on a particularly stormy night he lost the road, and they were wandering over Haldon. Excessively angry was the priest, and very provoking was the clerk. He led his master this way and that way, but they were yet upon the elevated country of Haldon.

At length the priest, in a great rage, exclaimed, "I would rather have the devil for a guide than you." Presently the clatter of horse's hoofs were heard, and a peasant, on a moor pony, rode up. The priest told of his condition, and the peasant volunteered to guide them. On rode peasant, priest, and clerk, and presently they were at Dawlish. The night was tempestuous, the ride had quickened the appetite of the priest, and he was wet through,—therefore, when his friend asked him to supper, as they approached an old ruined house, through the windows of which bright lights were shining, there was no hesitation in accepting the invitation.

There were a host of friends gathered together—a strange, wild-looking lot of men. But as the tables were laden with substantial dishes, and blackjacks were standing thick around, the parson, and the clerk too, soon made friends with all.

They ate and drank, and became most irreligiously uproarious. The parson sang hunting songs, and songs in praise of a certain old gentleman, with whom a priest should not have maintained any acquaintance. These were very highly appreciated, and every man joined loudly in the choruses. Night wore away, and at last news was brought that the bishop was dead. This appeared to rouse up the parson, who was only too eager to get

the first intelligence, and go to work to secure the hope of his ambition. So master and man mounted their horses, and bade adieu to their hilarious friends.

They were yet at the door of the mansion—somehow or other the horses did not appear disposed to move. They were whipped and spurred, but to no purpose.

"The devil's in the horses," said the priest.

"I b'lieve he is," said the clerk.

"Devil or no devil, they shall go," said the parson, cutting his horse madly with his heavy whip.

There was a roar of unearthly laughter.

The priest looked round—his drinking friends were all turned into demons, wild with glee, and the peasant guide was an arch little devil, looking on with a marvellously curious twinkle in his eyes. The noise of waters was around them; and now the priest discovered that the mansion had disappeared, and that waves beat heavy upon his horse's flanks, and rushed over the smaller horse of his man.

Repentance was too late.

In the morning following this stormy night, two horses were found straying on the sands of Dawlish; and clinging with the grasp of death to two rocks were found the parson and the clerk. There stand the rocks to which the devil had given the forms of horses—an enduring monument to all generations.

THE SPECTRE BRIDEGROOM

Long, long ago a farmer named Lenine lived in Boscean. He had but one son, Frank Lenine, who was indulged into waywardness by both his parents. In addition to the farm servants, there was one, a young girl, Nancy Trenoweth, who especially assisted Mrs. Lenine in all the various duties of a small farmhouse.

Nancy Trenoweth was very pretty, and although perfectly uneducated, in the sense in which we now employ the term education, she possessed many native graces, and she had acquired much knowledge, really useful to one whose aspirations would probably never rise higher than to be mistress of a farm of a few acres. Educated by parents who had certainly never seen the world beyond Penzance, her ideas of the world were limited to a few miles around the Land's End. But although her book

of nature was a small one, it had deeply impressed her mind with its influences. The wild taste, the small but fertile valley, the rugged hills, with their crowns of cairns, the moors rich in the golden furze and the purple heath, the sea-beaten cliffs, and the silver sands, were the pages she had studied, under the guidance of a mother who conceived, in the sublimity of her presence, that everything in nature was the home of some spirit form. The soul of the girl was imbued with the deeply religious dye of her mother's mind, whose religion was only a sense of an unknown world immediately beyond our own. The elder Nancy Trenoweth exerted over the villagers around her considerable power. They did not exactly fear her. She was too free from evil for that; but they were conscious of a mental superiority, and yielded without complaining to her sway.

The result of this was, that the younger Nancy, although compelled to service, always exhibited some pride, from a feeling that her mother was a superior woman to any around her.

She never felt herself inferior to her master and mistress, yet she complained not of being in subjection to them. There were so many interesting features in the character of this young servant girl that she became in many respects like a daughter to her mistress. There was no broad line of division in those days, in even the manorial hall, between the lord and his domestics, and still less defined was the position of the employer and the employed in a small farmhouse. Consequent on this condition of things, Frank Lenine and Nancy were thrown as much together as if they had been brother and sister. Frank was rarely checked in anything by his over-proud parents, who were especially proud of their son, since he was regarded as the handsomest young man in the parish. Frank conceived a very warm attachment for Nancy, and she was not a little proud of her lover. Although it was evident to all the parish that Frank and Nancy were seriously devoted to each other, the young man's parents were blind to it, and were taken by surprise when one day Frank asked his father and mother to consent to his marrying Nancy.

The Lenines had allowed their son to have his own way from his youth up; and now, in a matter which brought into play the strongest of human feelings, they were angry because he refused to bend to their wills.

The old man felt it would be a degredation for a Lenine to marry a Trenoweth, and, in the most unreasoning manner, he resolved it should never be.

The first act was to send Nancy home to Alsia Mill, where her parents resided; the next was an imperious command to his son never again to see the girl.

The commands of the old are generally powerless upon the young where the affairs of the heart are concerned. So were they upon Frank. He, who was rarely seen of an evening beyond the garden of his father's cottage, was now as constantly absent from his home. The house, which was wont to be a pleasant one, was strangely altered. A gloom had fallen over all things; the father and son rarely met as friends—the mother and her boy had now a feeling of reserve. Often there were angry altercations between the father and son, and the mother felt she could not become the defender of her boy in open acts of disobedience, his bold defiance of his parents' commands.

Rarely an evening passed that did not find Nancy and Frank together in some retired nook. The Holy Well was a favourite meeting-place, and here the most solemn vows were made. Locks of hair were exchanged; a wedding-ring, taken from the finger of a corpse, was broken, when they vowed that they would be united either dead or alive; and they even climbed at night the granite-pile at Treryn, and swore by the Logan Rock the same strong vow.

Time passed onward thus unhappily, and, as the result of the endeavours to quench out the passion by force, it grew stronger under the repressing power, and, like imprisoned steam, eventually burst through all restraint.

Nancy's parents discovered at length that moonlight meetings between two untrained, impulsive youths, had a natural result, and they were now doubly earnest in their endeavours to compel Frank to marry their daughter.

The elder Lenine could not be brought to consent to this, and he firmly resolved to remove his son entirely from what he considered the hateful influences of the Trenoweths. He resolved to go to Plymouth, to take his son with him, and, if possible, to send him away to sea, hoping thus to wean him from his folly, as he considered this love-madness. Frank, poor fellow, with the best intentions, was not capable of any sustained effort, and consequently he at length succumbed to his father; and, to

escape his persecution, he entered a ship bound for India, and bade adieu to his native land.

Frank could not write, and this happened in days when letters could be forwarded only with extreme difficulty, consequently Nancy never heard from her lover.

A baby had been born into a troublesome world, and the infant became a real solace to the young mother. As the child grew, it became an especial favourite with its grandmother; the elder Nancy rejoiced over the little prattler, and forgot her cause of sorrow. Young Nancy lived for her child, and on the memory of its father. Subdued in spirit she was, but her affliction had given force to her character, and she had been heard to declare that wherever Frank might be she was ever present with him; whatever might be the temptations of the hour, that her influence was all-powerful over him for good. She felt that no distance could separate their souls, that no time could be long enough to destroy the bond between them.

A period of distress fell upon the Trenoweths, and it was necessary that Nancy should leave her home once more, and go again into service. Her mother took charge of the babe, and she found a situation in the village of Kimyall, in the parish of Paul. Nancy, like her mother, contrived by force of character to maintain an ascendancy amongst her companions. She had formed an acquaintance, which certainly never grew into friendship, with some of the daughters of the small farmers around. These girls were all full of the superstitions of the time and place.

The winter was coming on, and nearly three years had passed away since Frank Lenine left his country. As yet there was no sign. Nor father, nor mother, nor maiden had heard of him, and they sorrowed over his absence. The Lenines desired to have Nancy's child, but the Trenoweths would not part with it. They went so far even as to endeavour to persuade Nancy to live again with them, but Nancy was not at all disposed to submit to their wishes.

It was All-hallows Eve, and two of Nancy's companions persuaded her—no very difficult task—to go with them and sow hemp-seed.

At midnight the three maidens stole out unperceived into Kimyall town-place to perform their incantation. Nancy was the first to sow, the others being less bold than she.

Boldly she advanced, saying, as she scattered the seed, —

"Hemp-seed I sow thee,
Hemp-seed grow thee;
And he who will my true love be,
Come after me
And shaw thee."

This was repeated three times, when, looking back over her left shoulder, she saw Lenine; but he looked so angry that she shrieked with fear, and broke the spell. One of the other girls, however, resolved now to make trial of the spell, and the result of her labours was the vision of a white coffin. Fear now fell on all, and they went home sorrowful, to spend each one a sleepless night.

November came with its storms, and during one terrific night a large vessel was thrown upon the rocks in Bernowhall Cliff, and, beaten by the impetuous waves she was soon in pieces. Amongst the bodies of the crew washed ashore, nearly all of whom perished, was Frank Lenine. He was not dead when found, but the only words he lived to speak were begging the people to send for Nancy Trenoweth, that he might make her his wife before he died.

Rapidly sinking, Frank was borne by his friends on a litter to Boscean, but he died as he reached the town-place. His parents, overwhelmed in their own sorrows, thought nothing of Nancy, and without her knowing that Lenine had returned, the poor fellow was laid in his last bed, in Burian Churchyard.

On the night of the funeral, Nancy went, as was her custom, to lock the door of the house, and as was her custom too, she looked out into the night. At this instant a horseman rode up in hot haste, called her by name, and hailed her in a voice that made her blood boil.

The voice was the voice of Lenine. She could never forget that; and the horse she now saw was her sweetheart's favourite colt, on which he had often ridden at night to Alsia.

The rider was imperfectly seen; but he looked very sorrowful, and deadly pale, still Nancy knew him to be Frank Lenine.

He told her that he had arrived home, and that the first moment he was at liberty he had taken horse to fetch his loved one, and to make her his bride.

Nancy's excitement was so great, that she was easily persuaded to spring on the horse behind him, that they might reach his home before the morning.

When she took Lenine's hand a cold shiver passed throug her, and as she grasped his waist to secure herself in her seat, her arm became as stiff as ice. She lost all power of speech, and suffered deep fear, yet she knew not why. The moon had arisen, and now burst out in full flood of light, through the heavy clouds which had obscured it. The horse pursued its journey with great rapidity, and whenever in weariness it slackened its speed, the peculiar voice of the rider aroused its drooping energies. Beyond this no word was spoken since Nancy had mounted behind her lover. They now came to Trove Bottom, where there was no bridge at that time; they dashed into the river. The moon shone full in their faces. Nancy looked into the stream, and saw that the rider was in a shroud and other grave-clothes. She now knew that she was being carried away by a spirit, yet she had no power to save herself; indeed, the inclination to do so did not exist.

On went the horse at a furious pace, until they came to the blacksmith's shop near Burian Churchtown, when she knew by the light from the forge fire thrown across the road that the smith was still at his labours. She now recovered speech. "Save me! Save me! Save me!" she cried with all her might. The smith sprang from the door of the smithy, with a red-hot iron in his hand, and as the horse rushed by, caught the woman's dress in one hand, and his grasp was like that of a vice. The horse passed like the wind, and Nancy and the smith were pulled down as far as the old Almshouses, near the churchyard. Here the horse for a moment stopped. The smith seized that moment, and with his hot iron burned off the dress from the rider's hand, thus saving Nancy, more dead than alive; while the rider passed over the wall of the churchyard, and vanished on the grave in which Lenine had been laid but a few hours before.

The smith took Nancy into his shop, and he soon aroused some of his neighbours, who took the poor girl back to Alsia. Her parents laid her on her bed. She spoke no word, but to ask for her child, to request her mother to give up her child to Lenine's parents, and her desire to be buried in his grave. Before the morning light fell on the world, Nancy had breathed her last breath.

A horse was seen that night to pass through the Church-town like a ball from a musket, and in the morning Lenine's colt was found dead in Bernowhall Cliff, covered with foam, its eyes forced from its head, and its swollen tongue hanging out of its mouth. On Lenine's grave was found the piece of Nancy's dress which was left in the spirit's hand when the smith burnt her from his grasp.

It is said that one or two of the sailors who survived the wreck related after the funeral, how, on the thirteenth of October, at night, Lenine was like one mad; they could scarcely keep him in the ship. He seemed more asleep than awake, and, after great excitement, he fell as if dead upon the deck, and lay so for hours. When he came to himself, he told them that he had been taken to the village of Kimyall, and that if he ever married the woman who had cast the spell, he would make her suffer the longest day she had to live for drawing his soul out of his body.

Poor Nancy was buried in Lenine's grave, and her companion in sowing hemp-seed, who saw the white coffin, slept beside her within the year.

This story bears a striking resemblance to the "Lenore" of Burger, which remarkable ballad can scarcely have found its way, even yet, to Boscean.

THE GHOST OF ROSEWARNE

"Ezekiel Grosse, Gent., attorney-at-law," bought the lands of Rosewarne from one of the De Rosewarnes, who had become involved in difficulties, by endeavouring, without sufficient means, to support the dignity of his family. There is reason for believing that Ezekeil was the legal advisor of this unfortunate Rosewarne, and that he was not over-honest in his transactions with his client. However this may be, Ezekiel Grosse had scarcely made Rosewarne his dwellingplace, before he was alarmed by noises, at first of an unearthly character, and subsequently, one very dark night, by the appearance of the ghost himself in the form of a worn and aged man. The first appearance was in the park, but subsequently repeated his visits in the house, but always after dark. Ezekiel Grosse was not a man to be terrified at trifles, and for some time he paid but slight attention to his nocturnal visitor. Howbeit, the repetition of visits, and certain mysterious indications on the part of the

spectre, became annoying to Ezekiel. One night, when seated in his office examining some deeds, and being rather irritable, having lost an important suit, his visitor approached him, making some strange indications which the lawyer could not understand. Ezekiel suddenly exclaimed, "In the name of God, what wantest thou?"

"To show thee, Ezekiel Grosse, where the gold for which thou longest lies buried."

No one ever lived upon whom the greed of gold was stronger than on Ezekiel, yet he hesitated now that his spectral friend had spoken so plainly, and trembled in every limb as the ghost slowly delivered himself in sepulcheral tones of this telling speech.

The lawyer look fixedly on the spectre, but he dared not utter a word. He longed to obtain possession of the secret, yet he feared to ask him where he was to find this treasure. The spectre looked as fixedly at the poor trembling lawyer, as if enjoying the sight of his terror. At length, lifting his finger, he beckoned Ezekiel to follow him, turning at the same time to leave the room. Ezekiel was glued to his seat; he could not exert strength enough to move, although he desired to do so.

"Come!" said the ghost, in a hollow voice. The lawyer was powerless to come.

"Gold!" exclaimed the old man, in a whining tone, though in a louder key.

"Where?" gasped Ezekiel.

"Follow me, and I will show thee," said the ghost. Ezekiel endeavoured to rise, but it was in vain.

"I command thee, come!" almost shrieked the ghost. Ezekiel felt that he was compelled to follow his friend; and by some supernatural power rather than his own, he followed the spectre out of the room, and through the hall, into the park.

They passed onward through the night—the ghost gliding before the lawyer, and guiding him by a peculiar phosphorescent light, which appeared to glow from every part of the form, until they arrived at a little dell, and had reached a small cairn formed of granite boulders. By this the spectre rested; and when Ezekiel had approached it, and was standing on the other side of the cairn, still trembling, the aged man, looking fixedly in his face, said, in low tones—

"Ezekiel Grosse, thou longest for gold, as I did. I won the glittering prize, but I could not enjoy it. Heaps of treasure are

buried beneath those stones; it is thine, if thou diggest for it. Win the gold, Ezekiel. Glitter with the wicked ones of the world; and when thou art the most joyous, I will look in upon thy happiness." The ghost then disappeared, and as soon as Grosse could recover himself from the extreme trepidation,—the result of mixed feelings,—he looked about him, and finding himself alone, he exclaimed, "Ghost or devil, I will soon prove whether or not thou liest!" Ezekiel is said to have heard a laugh, echoing between the hills, as he said those words.

The lawyer noted well the spot; returned to his house; pondered on all the circumstances of his case; and eventually resolved to seize the earliest opportunity, when he might do so unobserved, of removing the stones, and examining the ground beneath them.

A few nights after this, Ezekiel went to the little cairn; and by the aid of a crowbar, he soon overturned the stones, and laid the ground bare. He then commenced digging, and had not proceeded far when his spade struck against some other metal. He carefully cleared away the earth, and he then felt—for he could not see, having no light with him—that he had uncovered a metallic urn of some kind. He found it quite impossible to lift it, and he was therefore compelled to cover it up again, and replace the stones sufficiently to hide it from the observation of any chance wanderer.

The next night Ezekiel found that this urn, which was of bronze, contained gold coins of a very ancient date. He loaded himself with his treasure, and returned home. From time to time, at night, as Ezekiel found he could do so without exciting the suspicions of his servants, he visited the urn, and thus by degrees removed all the treasure to Rosewarne house. There was nothing in the series of circumstances which had surrounded Ezekiel which he could less understand than the fact that ghost of the old man had left off troubling him from the moment when he disclosed to him the hiding-place of this treasure.

The neighbouring gentry could not but observe the rapid improvements which Ezekiel Grosse made in his mansion, his grounds, in his personal appearance, and indeed in everything by which he was surrounded. In a short time he abandoned the law, and led in every respect the life of a country gentleman. He ostentatiously paraded his power to procure all earthly enjoyments, and, in spite of his notoriously bad character, he

succeeded in drawing many of the landed proprietors around him.

Things went well with Ezekiel. The man who could in those days visit London in his own carriage and four was not without a large circle of flatterers. The lawyer who had struggled hard, in the outset of life, to secure wealth, and who did not always employ the most honest means for doing so, and receive from them expressions of the admiration in which the world holds the possessor of gold. His old tricks were forgotten, and he was put in places of honour. This state of things continued for some time; indeed, Grosse's entertainments became more and more splendid, and his revels more and more seductive to those he admitted to share them with him. The Lord of Rosewarne was the Lord of the West. To him every one bowed the knee: he walked the Earth as the proud possessor of a large share of the planet.

It was Christmas eve, and a large gathering there was at Rosewarne. In the hall the ladies and gentlemen were in the full enjoyment of the dance, and in the kitchen all the tenantry and the servants were emulating their superiors. Everything went joyously; and when mirth was in full swing, and Ezekiel felt to the full the influence of wealth, it appeared as if one moment the chill of death had fallen over every one. The dancers paused, and looked one at another, each one struck with the other's paleness; and there, in the middle of the hall, every one saw a strange old man looking angrily, but in silence, at Ezekiel Grosse, who was fixed in terror, blank as a statue.

No one had seen this old man enter the hall, yet there he was in the midst of them. It was but for a minute, and he was gone. Ezekiel, as if a frozen torrent of water had thawed in an instant, roared with impetuous laughter.

"What do you think of that for a Christmas play? There was an old Father Christmas for you! Ha! ha! ha! ha! How frightened you all look! Butler, order the men to hand round the spiced wines. On with the dancing, my friends! It was only a trick, ay, and a clever one, which I put upon you. On with your dancing, my friends!"

Notwithstanding his boisterous attempts to restore the spirit of the evening, Ezekiel could not succeed. There was an influence stronger than any which he could command; and one by one framing sundry excuses, his guests took their departure,

every one of them satisfied that all was not right at Rosewarne.

From that Christmas eve Grosse was a changed man. He tried to be his former self; but it was in vain. Again and again he called his gay companions around him; but at every feast there appeared one more than was desired. An aged man—weird beyond measure—took his place at the table in the middle of the feast; and although he spoke not, he exerted a miraculous power over all. No one dared to move; no one ventured to speak. Occasionally Ezekiel assumed an appearance of courage, which he felt not; rallied his guests, and made sundry excuses for the presence of his aged friend, whom he represented as having a mental infirmity, as being deaf and dumb. On all such occasions the old man rose from the table, and looking at the host, laughed a demonac laugh of joy, and departed as quietly as he came.

The natural consequence of this was that Ezekiel Grosse's friends fell away from him, and he became a lonely man, amidst his vast possessions—his only companion being his faithful clerk, John Call.

The persecuting presence of the spectre became more and more constant; and wherever the poor lawyer went, there was the aged man at his side. From being one of the finest men in the country, he became a miserably attenuated and bowed old man. Misery was stamped on every feature—terror was indicated in every movement. At length he appears to have besought his ghostly attendant to free him of his presence. It was long before the ghost would listen to any terms; but Ezekiel at length agreed to surrender the whole of his wealth to any one whom the spectre might indicate, he obtained a promise that upon this being carried out, in a perfectly legal manner, in favour of John Call, that he should no longer be haunted.

This was, after numerous struggles on the part of Ezekiel to retain his property, or at least some portion of it, legally settled, and John Call became possessor of Rosewarne and the adjoining lands. Grosse was then informed that this evil spirit was one of the ancestors of the Rosewarne, from whom by his fraudulent dealings he obtained the place, and that he was allowed to visit the earth again for the purpose of inflicting the most condign punishment on the avaricious lawyer. His avarice had been gratified, his pride had been pampered to the highest; and then he was made a pitiful spectacle, at whom all

men pointed and no one pitied. He lived on in misery, but it was for a short time. He was found dead: and the country people ever said that his death was a violent one; they spoke of marks on his body, and some even asserted that the spectre of De Rosewarne was seen rejoicing amidst a crowd of devils, as they bore the spirit of Ezekiel over Carn Brea.

THE EXECUTION AND WEDDING

A woman, who lived at Ludgvan, was executed at Bodmin for the murder of her husband. There was but little doubt that she had been urged on to the diabolical deed by a horse-dealer, known as Yorkshire Jack, with whom, for a long period, she was generally supposed to have been criminally acquainted.

Now, it will be remembered that this really happened within the present century. One morning, during my residence in Penzance, an old woman from Ludgvan called on me with some trifling message. While she was waiting for my answer, I made some ordinary remark about the weather.

"It's all owing to Sarah Polgrain," said she.

"Sarah Polgrain!" said I; "and who is Sarah Polgrain?"

Then the voluble old lady told me the whole story of the poisoning, with which we need not, at present, concern ourselves. By and by the tale grew especially interesting, and there I resume it.

Sarah had begged that Yorkshire Jack might accompany her to the scaffold when she was led to execution. This was granted; and on the dreadful morning, there stood this unholy pair, the fatal beam on which the woman's body was in a few minutes to swing, before them.

They kissed each other, and whispered words passed between them.

The executioner intimated that the moment of execution had arrived, and that they must part. Sarah Polgrain, looking earnestly into the man's eyes, said,

"You will?"

Yorkshire Jack replied, "I will!" and they separated. The man retired amongst the crowd, the woman was soon a corpse, pendulating in the wind.

Years passed on. Yorkshire Jack was never the same man as before, his whole bearing was altared. His bold, his dashing

air deserted him. He walked, or rather wandered, slowly about the streets of the town, or the lanes of the country. He constantly moved his head from side to side, looking first over one, and then over the other shoulder, as though dreading that some one was following him.

The stout man became thin, his ruddy cheeks more pale, and his eyes sunken.

At length he disappeared, and it was discovered—for Yorkshire Jack had made a confidant of some Ludgvan man—that he had pledged himself, "living or dead, to become the husband of Sarah Polgrain, after the lapse of years."

To escape, if possible, from himself, Jack had gone to sea in the merchant service.

Well, the period had arrived when this unholy promise was to be fulfilled. Yorkshire Jack was returning from the Mediterranean in a fruit-ship. He was met by the devil and Sarah Polgrain far out at sea, off the Land's End. Jack would not accompany them willingly; so they followed the ship for days, during all which time she was involved in a storm. Eventually Jack was washed from the deck, by such a wave as the oldest sailor had never seen; and presently, amidst loud thunders and flashing lightnings, riding as it were in a black cloud, three figures were seen passing onward. These were the devil, Sarah Polgrain, and Yorkshire Jack; and this was the cause of the storm.

"It is all true, as you may learn if you will inquire," said the old woman; "for many of her kin live in Church-town."

THE DREAM-QUEST OF UNKNOWN KADATH

By H. P. Lovecraft

III

So when Carter bade that old grey chief of the cats adieu, he did not seek the terraced palace of rose crystals but walked out the eastern gate and across the daisied fields toward a peaked gable which he glimpsed through the oaks of a park sloping up to the sea-cliffs. And in time he came to a great hedge and a gate with a little brick lodge, and when he rang the bell there hobbled to admit him no robed and anointed lackey of the palace but a small stubby old man in a smock who spoke as best he could in the quaint tones of far Cornwall. And Carter walked up the shady path between trees as near as possible to England's trees, and climbed the terraces among gardens set out as in Queen Anne's time. At the door, flanked by stone cats in the old way, he was met by a whiskered butler in suitable livery; and was presently taken to the library where Kuranes, Lord of Ooth-Nargai and the Sky around Serannian, sat pensive in a chair by the window looking on his little seacoast village and wishing that his old nurse would come in and scold him because he was not ready for that hateful lawn-party at the vicar's, with the carriage waiting and his mother nearly out of patience.

Kuranes, clad in a dressing gown of the sort favoured by London tailors in his youth, rose eagerly to meet his guest; for the sight of an Anglo-Saxon from the waking world was very dear to him, even if it was a Saxon from Boston, Massachusetts, instead of from Cornwall. And for long they talked of old times, having much to say because both were old dreamers and well versed in the wonders of incredible places. Kuranes, indeed, had been out beyond the stars in the ultimate void, and was said to be the only one who had ever returned sane from such a voyage.

At length Carter brought up the subject of his quest, and asked of his host those questions he had asked of so many others. Kuranes did not know where Kadath was, or the marvellous sunset city; but he did know that the Great Ones were very dangerous creatures to seek out, and that the Other Gods had

strange ways of protecting them from impertinent curiosity. He had learned much of the Other Gods in distant parts of space, especially in that region where form does not exist, and coloured gases study the innermost secrets. The violet gas, S'ngac, had told him terrible things of the crawling chaos, Nyarlathotep, and had warned him never to approach the central void where the daemon sultan Azathoth gnaws hungrily in the dark. Altogether, it was not well to meddle with the Elder Ones; and if they persistently denied all access to the marvellous city, it were better not to seek that city.

Kuranes furthermore doubted whether his guest would profit aught by coming to the city even were he to gain it. He himself had dreamed and yearned long years for lovely Celephais and the land of Ooth-Nargai, and for the freedom and colour and high experience of life devoid of its chains, conventions, and stupidities. But now that he was come into that city and that land, and was the king thereof, he found the freedom and the vividness all too soon worn out, and monotonous for want of linkage with anything firm in his feelings and memories. He was a king in Ooth-Nargai, but found no meaning therein, and drooped always for the old familiar things of England that had shaped his youth. All his kingdom would he give for the sound of Cornish church bells over the downs, and all the thousand minarets of Celephais for the steep homely roofs of the village near his home. So he told his guest that the unknown sunset city might not hold quite that content he sought, and that perhaps it had better remain a glorious and half-remembered dream. For he had visited Carter often in the old waking days, and knew well the lovely New England slopes that had given him birth.

At the last, he was very certain, the seeker would long only for the early remembered scenes; the glow of Beacon Hill at evening, the tall steeples and winding hill streets of quaint Kingsport, the hoary gambel roofs of ancient and witch-haunted Arkham, and the blessed meads and valleys where stone walls rambled and white farmhouse gables peeped out from bowers of verdure. These things he told Randolph Carter, but still the seeker held to his purpose. And in the end they parted each with his own conviction, and Carter went back through the bronze gate into Celephais and down the Street of Pillars to the old sea wall, where he talked more with the mariners of far ports and waited for the dark ship from cold and twilight Inquanok,

whose strange-faced sailors and onyx-traders had in them the blood of the Great Ones.

One starlit evening, when the Pharos shone splendid over the harbour, the longed-for ship put in, and strange-faced sailors and traders appeared one by one and group by group in the ancient taverns along the sea-wall. It was very exciting to see again those living faces so like the godlike features on Ngranek, but Carter did not hasten to speak with the silent seamen. He did not know how much pride and secrecy and dim supernal memory might fill those children of the Great Ones, and was sure it would not be wise to tell them of his quest or ask too closely of that cold desert stretching north of their twilight land. They talked little with the other folk in those ancient sea taverns; but would gather in groups in remote corners and sing among themselves the haunting airs of unknown places, or chant long tales to one another in accents alien to the rest of dreamland. And so rare and moving were those airs and tales that one might guess their wonders from the faces of those who listened, even though the words came to common ears only as strange cadence and obscure melody.

For a week the strange seamen lingered in the taverns and traded in the bazaars of Celephais, and before they sailed Carter had taken passage on their dark ship, telling them that he was an old onyx miner and wishful to work in their quarries. That ship was very lovely and cunningly wrought, being of teakwood with ebony fittings and traceries of gold, and the cabin in which the traveller lodged had hangings of silk and velvet. One morning at the turn of the tide the sails were raised and the anchor lifted, and as Carter stood on the high stern he saw the sunrise blazing walls and bronze statues and golden minarets of ageless Celephais sink into the distance, and the snowy peak of Mount Aran grow smaller and smaller. By noon there was nothing in sight save the gentle blue of the Cerenerian Sea, with one painted galley afar off bound for that realm of Serannian where the sea meets the sky.

And night came with gorgeous stars, and the dark ship steered for Charles' Wain and the Little Bear as they swung slowly round the pole. And the sailors sang strange songs of unknown places, and they stole off one by one to the forecastle while the wistful watchers murmured old chants and leaned over the rail to glimpse the luminous fish playing in bowers beneath the sea.

Carter went to sleep at midnight, and rose in the glow of a young morning, marking that the sun seemed farther south than was its wont. And all through that second day he made progress in knowing the men of the ship, getting them little by little to talk of their cold twilight land, of their exquisite onyx city, and of their fear of the high and impassable peaks beyond which Leng was said to be. They told him how sorry they were that no cats would stay in the land of Inquanok, and how they thought the hidden nearness of Leng was to blame for it. Only of the stony desert to the north they would not talk. There was something disquieting about that desert, and it was thought expedient not to admit its existence.

On later days they talked of the quarries in which Carter said he was going to work. There were many of them, for all the city of Inquanok was builded of onyx, whilst great polished blocks of it were traded in Rinar, Ogrothan, and Celephais and at home with the merchants of Thraa, Ilarnek, and Kadatheron, for the beautiful wares of those fabulous ports. And far to the north, almost in the cold desert whose existence the men of Inquanok did not care to admit, there was an unused quarry greater than all the rest, from which had been hewn in forgotten times such prodigious lumps and blocks that the sight of their chiselled vacancies struck terror to all who beheld. Who had mined those incredible blocks, and whither they had been transported, no man might say; but it was thought best not to trouble that quarry, around which such inhuman memories might conceivably cling. So it was left all alone in the twilight, with only the raven and the rumoured Shantak-bird to brood on its immensities. When Carter heard of this quarry he was moved to deep thought, for he knew from old tales that the Great Ones' castle atop unknown Kadath is of onyx.

Each day the sun wheeled lower and lower in the sky, and the mists overhead grew thicker and thicker. And in two weeks there was not any sunlight at all, but only weird grey twilight shining through a dome of eternal cloud by day, and a cold starless phosphorescence from the under side of that cloud by night. On the twentieth day a great jagged rock in the sea was sighted from afar, the first land glimpsed since Aran's snowy peak had dwindled behind the ship. Carter asked the captain the name of that rock, but was told that it had no name and had never been sought by any vessels because of the sounds that

came from it at night. And when, after dark, a dull and ceaseless howling arose from that jagged granite place, the traveller was glad that no stop had been made, and that the rock had no name. The seamen prayed and chanted till the noise was out of earshot, and Carter dreamed terrible dreams within dreams in the small hours.

Two mornings after that there loomed far ahead and to the east a line of great grey peaks whose tops were lost in the changeless clouds of that twilight world. And at the sight of them the sailors sang glad songs, and some knelt down on the deck to pray; so that Carter knew they were come to the land of Inquanok and would soon be moored to the basalt quays of the great town bearing that land's name. Toward noon a dark coastline appeared, and before three o'clock there stood out against the north the bulbous domes and fantastic spires of the onyx city. Rare and curious did that archaic city rise above its walls and quays, all of delicate black with scrolls, flutings, and arabesques of inlaid gold. Tall and many-windowed were the houses, and carved on every side with flowers and patterns whose dark symmetries dazzled the eye with a beauty more poignant than light. Some ended in swelling domes that tapered to a point, others in terraced pyramids whereon rose clustered minarets displaying every phase of strangeness and imagination. The walls were low, and pierced by frequent gates, each under a great arch rising high above the general level and capped by the head of a god chiselled with that same skill displayed in the monstrous face on distant Ngranek. On a hill in the centre rose a sixteen-angled tower greater than all the rest and bearing a high pinnacled belfry resting on a flattened dome. This, the seamen said, was the Temple of the Elder Ones, and was ruled by an old High-Priest sad with inner secrets.

At intervals the clang of a strange bell shivered over the onyx city, answered each time by a peal of mystic music made up of horns, viols, and chanting voices. And from a row of tripods on a galley round the high dome of the temple there burst flares of flame at certain moments; for the priests and people of that city were wise in the primal mysteries, and faithful in keeping the rhythms of the Great Ones as set forth in scrolls older than the *Pnakotic Manuscripts*. As the ship rode past the great basalt breakwater into the harbour the lesser noises of the city grew manifest, and Carter saw the slaves, sailors, and merchants on

the docks. The sailors and merchants were of the strange-faced race of the gods, but the slaves were squat, slant-eyed folk said by rumour to have drifted somehow across or around the impassable peaks from the valleys beyond Leng. The wharves reached wide outside the city wall and bore upon them all manner of merchandise from the galleys anchored there, while at one end were great piles of onyx both carved and uncarved awaiting shipment to the far markets of Rinar, Ograthan and Celephais.

It was not yet evening when the dark ship anchored beside a jutting quay of stone and all the sailors and traders filed ashore and through the arched gate into the city. The streets of that city were paved with onyx and some of them were wide and straight whilst others were crooked and narrow. The houses near the water were lower than the rest, and bore above their curiously arched doorways certain signs of gold said to be in honor of the respective small gods that favoured each. The captain of the ship took Carter to an old sea tavern where flocked the mariners of quaint countries, and promised that he would next day show him the wonders of the twilight city, and lead him to the taverns of the onyx-miners by the northern wall. And evening fell, and little bronze lamps were lighted, and the sailors in that tavern sang songs of remote places. But when from the high tower the great bell shivered over the city, and the peal of the horns and viols and voices rose cryptical in answer thereto, all ceased their songs or tales and bowed silent till the last echo died away. For there is a wonder and a strangeness on the twilight city of Inquanok, and men fear to be lax in its rites lest a doom and a vengeance lurk unsuspectedly close.

Far in the shadows of that tavern Carter saw a squat form he did not like, for it was unmistakably that of the slant-eyed merchant he had seen so long before in the taverns of Dylath-Leen, who was reputed to trade with the horrible stone villages of Leng which no healthy folk visit and whose evil fires are seen at night from afar, and even to have dealt with that high-priest not to be described, which wears a yellow silken mask over its face and dwells all alone in a prehistoric stone monastery. This man had seemed to shew a queer gleam of knowing when Carter asked the traders of Dylath-Leen about the cold waste and Kadath; and somehow his presence in dark and haunted Inquanok so close to the wonders of the north, was not a reassuring thing. He slipped wholly out of sight before Carter could speak to him,

and sailors later said that he had come with a yak caravan from some point not well determined, bearing the colossal and rich-flavoured eggs of the rumoured Shantak-bird to trade for the dexterous jade goblets that merchants brought from Ilarnek.

On the following morning the ship-captain led Carter through the onyx streets of Inquanok, dark under their twilight sky. The inlaid doors and figured house-fronts, carven balconies and crystal-paned oriels all gleamed with a sombre and polished loveliness; and now and then a plaza would open out with black pillars, colonnades, and the statues of curious beings both human and fabulous. Some of the vistas down long and unbending streets, or through side alleys and over bulbous domes, spires, and arabesqued roofs, were weird and beautiful beyond words; and nothing was more splendid than the massive heights of the great central Temple of the Elder Ones with its sixteen carven sides, its flattened dome, and its lofty pinnacled belfry, over-topping all else, and majestic whatever its foreground. And always to the east, far beyond the city walls and the leagues of pasture land, rose the gaunt grey sides of those topless and impassable peaks across which hideous Leng was said to lie.

The captain took Carter to the mighty temple, which is set with its walled garden in a great round plaza whence the streets go as spokes from a wheel's hub. The seven arched gates of that garden, each having over it a carven face like those on the city's gates, are always open, and the people roam reverently at will down the tiled paths and through the little lanes lined with grotesque termini and the shrines of modest gods. And there are fountains, pools, and basins there to reflect the frequent blaze of the tripods on the high balcony, all of onyx and having in them small luminous fish taken by divers from the lower bowers of ocean. When the deep clang from the temple belfry shivers over the garden and the city, and the answer of the horns and viols and voices peals out from the seven lodges by the garden gates, there issue from the seven doors of the temple long columns of masked and hooded priests in black, bearing at arm's length before them great golden bowls from which a curious steam rises. And all the seven columns strut peculiarly in single file, legs thrown far forward without bending the knees, down the walks that lead to the seven lodges with the temple, and that the long files of priests return through them; nor is it un-whispered that deep flights of onyx steps go down to mysteries

that are never told. But only a few are those who hint that the priests in the masked and hooded columns are not human beings.

Carter did not enter the temple, because none but the Veiled King is permitted to do that. But before he left the garden, the hour of the bell came, and he heard the shivering clang deafeningly above him, and the wailing of the horns and viols and voices loud from the lodges by the gates. And down the seven great walks stalked the long files of bowl-bearing priests in their singular way, giving to the traveller a fear which human priests do not give. When the last of them had vanished, he left that garden, noting as he did so a spot on the pavement over which the bowls had passed. Even the ship-captain did not like that spot, and hurried him on toward the hill whereon the Veiled King's palace rises many-domed and marvellous.

The ways to the onyx palace are steep and narrow, all but the broad curving one where the king and his companions ride on yaks or in yak-drawn chariots. Carter and his guide climbed up an alley that was all steps, between inlaid walls bearing strange signs in gold, and under balconies and oriels whence sometimes floated soft strains of music or breaths of exotic fragrance. Always ahead loomed those titan walls, mighty buttresses, and clustered and bulbous domes for which the Veiled King's palace is famous; and at length they passed under a great black arch and emerged in the gardens of the monarch's pleasure. There Carter paused in faintness at so much beauty; for the onyx terraces and colonnaded walks, the gay porterres and delicate flowering trees espaliered to golden lattices, the brazen urns and tripods with cunning bas-reliefs, the pedestaled and almost breathing statues of veined black marble, the basalt-bottomed logvous tiled fountains with luminous fish, the tiny temples of iridescent singing birds atop carven columns, the marvellous scrollwork of the great bronze gates, and the blossoming vines trained along every inch of the polished walls all joined to form a sight whose loveliness was beyond reality, and half-fabulous even in the land of dream. There it shimmered like a vision under that grey twilight sky, with the domed and fretted magnificence of the palace ahead, and the fantastic silhouette of the distant impassable peaks on the right. And ever the small birds and the fountains sang, while the perfume of rare blossoms spread like a veil over that incredible garden. No

other human presence was there, and Carter was glad it was so. Then they turned and descended again the onyx alley of steps, for the palace itself no visitor may enter; and it is not well to look too long and steadily at the great central dome, since it is said to house the archaic father of all the rumoured Shantak-birds, and to send out queer dreams to the curious.

After that the captain took Carter to the north quarter of the town, near the gate of the Caravans, where are the taverns of the yak-merchants and the onyx-miners. And there, in a low-ceiled inn of quarrymen, they said farewell; for business called the captain whilst Carter was eager to talk with miners about the north. There were many men in that inn, and the traveller was not long in speaking to some of them; saying that he was an old miner of onyx, and anxious to know somewhat of Inquanok's quarries. But all that he learned was not much more than he knew before, for the miners were timid and evasive about the cold desert to the north and the quarry that no man visits. They had fears of fabled emissaries from around the mountains where Leng is said to lie, and of evil presences and nameless sentinels far north among the scattered rocks. And they whispered also that the rumoured Shantak-birds are no wholesome things; it being indeed for the best that no man has ever truly seen one (for that fabled father of Shantaks in the king's dome is fed in the dark).

The next day, saying that he wished to look over all the various mines for himself and to visit the scattered farms and quaint onyx villages of Inquanok, Carter hired a yak and stuffed great leathern saddle-bags for a journey. Beyond the Gate of the Caravans the road lay straight betwixt tilled fields, with many odd farmhouses crowned by low domes. At some of these houses the seeker stopped to ask questions, once finding a host so austere and reticent, and so full of an unplaced majesty like to that in the huge features on Ngranek, that he felt certain he had come at last upon one of the Great Ones themselves, or upon one with full nine-tenths of their blood, dwelling amongst men. And to that austere and reticent coltes he was careful to speak very well of the gods, and to praise all the blessings they had ever accorded him.

That night Carter camped in a roadside meadow beneath a great lygath-tree to which he tied his yak, and in the morning resumed his northward pilgrimage. At about ten o'clock he

reached the small-domed village of Urg, where traders rest and miners tell their tales, and paused in its taverns till noon. It is here that the great caravan road turns west toward Selarn, but Carter kept on north by the quarry road. All the afternoon he followed that rising road, which was somewhat narrower than the great highway, and which now led through a region with more rocks than tilled fields. And by evening the low hills on his left had risen into sizeable black cliffs, so that he knew he was close to the mining country. All the while the great gaunt sides of the impassable mountains towered afar off at his right, and the farther he went, the worse tales he heard of them from the scattered farmers and traders and drivers of lumbering onyx-carts along the way.

On the second night he camped in the shadow of a large black crag, tethered his yak to a stake driven in the ground. He observed the greater phosphorescence of the clouds at this northerly point, and more than once thought he saw dark shapes outlined against them. And on the third morning he came in sight of the first onyx quarry, and greeted the men who there laboured with picks and chisels. Before evening he had passed eleven quarries; the land being here given over altogether to onyx cliffs and boulders, with no vegetation at all, but only great rocky fragments scattered about a floor of black earth, with the grey impassable peaks always rising gaunt and sinister on his right. The third night he spent in a camp of quarry men whose flickering fires cast weird reflections on the polished cliffs to the west. And they sang many songs and told many tales, shewing such strange knowledge of the olden days and the habits of gods that Carter could see they held many latent memories of their sires, the Great Ones. They asked him whither he went, and cautioned him not to go too far to the north; but he replied that he was seeking new cliffs of onyx, and would take no more risks than were common among prospectors. In the morning he bade them adieu and rode on into the darkening north, where they had warned him he would find the feared and unvisited quarry whence hands older than men's hands had wrenched prodigious blocks. But he did not like it when, turning back to wave a last farewell, he thought he saw approaching the camp that squat and evasive old merchant with slanting eyes, whose conjectured traffick with Leng was the gossip of distant Dylath-Leen.

After two more quarries the inhabited part of Inquanok seemed to end, and the road narrowed to a steeply rising yak-path among forbidding black cliffs. Always on the right towered the gaunt and distant peaks, and as Carter climbed farther and farther into this untraversed realm he found it grew darker and colder. Soon he perceived that there were no prints of feet or hooves on the black path beneath, and realised that he was indeed come into strange and deserted ways of elder time. Once in a while a raven would croak far overhead, and now and then a flapping behind some vast rock would make him think uncomfortably of the rumoured Shantak-bird. But in the main he was alone with his shaggy steed, and it troubled him to observe that this excellent yak became more and more reluctant to advance, and more and more disposed to snort affrightedly at any small noise along the route.

The path now contracted between sable and glistening walls, and began to display an even greater steepness than before. It was a bad footing, and the yak often slipped on the stony fragments strewn thickly about. In two hours Carter saw ahead a definite crest, beyond which was nothing but dull grey sky, and blessed the prospect of a level or downward course. To reach this crest, however, was no easy task; for the way had grown nearly perpendicular, and was perilous with loose black gravel and small stones. Eventually Carter dismounted and led his dubious yak; pulling very hard when the animal balked or stumbled, and keeping his own footing as best he might. Then suddenly he came to the top and saw beyond, and gasped at what he saw.

The path indeed led straight ahead and slightly down, with the same lines of high natural walls as before; but on the left hand there opened out a monstrous space, vast acres in extent, where some archaic power had riven and rent the native cliffs of onyx in the form of a giant's quarry. Far back into the solid precipice ran that cyclopean gouge, and deep down within earth's bowels its lower delvings yawned. It was no quarry of man, and the concave sides were scarred with great squares, yards wide, which told of the size of the blocks once hewn by nameless hands and chisels. High over its jagged rim ravens flapped and croaked, and vague whirrings in the unseen depths told of bats or urhags or less mentionable presences haunting the endless blackness. There Carter stood in the narrow way amidst the

twilight with the rocky path sloping down before him; tall onyx cliffs on his right that led on as far as he could see and tall cliffs on the left chopped off just ahead to make that terrible and unearthly quarry.

All at once the yak uttered a cry and burst from his control, leaping past him and darting on in a panic till it vanished down the narrow slope toward the north. Stones kicked by its flying hooves fell over the brink of the quarry and lost themselves in the dark without any sound of striking bottom; but Carter ignored the perils of that scanty path as he raced breathlessly after the flying steed. Soon the left-hand cliffs resumed their course, making the way once more a narrow lane; and still the traveller leaped on after the yak whose great wide prints told of its desperate flight.

Once he thought he heard the hoofbeats of the frightened beast, and doubled his speed from this encouragement. He was covering miles, and little by little the way was broadening in front till he knew he must soon emerge on the cold and dreaded desert to the north. The gaunt grey flanks of the distant impassable peaks were again visible above the right hand crags, and ahead were the rocks and boulders of an open space which was clearly a foretaste of the dark and limitless plain. And once more those hoofbeats sounded in his ears, plainer than before, but this time giving terror instead of encouragement because he realized that they were not the frightened hoofbeats of his fleeing yak. The beats were ruthless and purposeful, and they were behind him.

Carter's pursuit of the yak became now a flight from an unseen thing, for though he dared not glance over his shoulder he felt that the presence behind him could be nothing wholesome or mentionable. His yak must have heard or felt it first, and he did not like to ask himself whether it had followed him from the haunts of men or had floundered up out of that black quarry pit. Meanwhile the cliffs had been left behind, so that the oncoming night fell over a great waste of sand and spectral rocks wherein all paths were lost. He could not see the hoofprints of his yak, but always from behind him there came that detestable clopping; mingled now and then with what he fancied were titanic flapping and whirring. That he was losing ground seemed unhappily clear to him, and he knew he was hopelessly lost in this broken and blasted desert of meaningless rocks and untravel-

led sands. Only those remote and impassable peaks on the right gave him any sense of direction, and even they were less clear as the grey twilight waned and the sickly phosphorescence of the clouds took its place.

Then dim and misty in the darkling north before him he glimpsed a terrible thing. He had thought it for some moments a range of black mountains, but now he saw it was something more. The phosphorescence of the brooding clouds shewed it plainly, and even silhouetted parts of it as vapours glowed behind. How distant it was he could not tell, but it must have been very far. It was thousands of feet high, stretching in a great concave arc from the grey impassable peaks to the unimagined westward spaces, and had once indeed been a ridge of mighty onyx hills. But now these hills were hills no more, for some hand greater than man's had touched them. Silent they squatted there atop the world like wolves or ghouls, crowned with clouds and mists and guarding the secrets of the north for ever. All in a great half circle they squatted, those dog-like mountains carven into monstrous watching statues, and their right hands were raised in menace against mankind.

It was only the flickering light of the clouds that made their nitred double heads seem to move, but, as Carter stumbled on, he saw arise from their shadowy caps great forms whose motions were no delusion. Winged and whirring, those forms grew larger each moment, and the traveller knew his stumbling was at an end. They were not any birds or bats known elsewhere on earth or in dreamland, for they were larger than elephants and had heads like a horse's. Carter knew that they must be the Shantak-birds of ill rumor, and wondered no more what evil guardians and nameless sentinels made men avoid the boreal rock desert. And as he stopped in final resignation he dared at last to look behind him, where indeed was trotting the squat slant-eyed trader of evil legend, grinning astride a lean yak and leading on a noxious horde of leering Shantaks to whose wings still clung the rime and nitre of the nether pits.

Trapped though he was by fabulous and hippocephalic winged nightmares that pressed around in great unholy circles, Randolph Carter did not lose consciousness. Lofty and horrible those titan gargoyles towered above him, while the slant-eyed merchant leaped down from his yak and stood grinning before the captive. Then the man motioned Carter to mount one of the

repugnant Shantaks, helping him up as his judgment struggled with his loathing. It was hard work ascending, for the Shantak-bird had scales instead of feathers, and those scales are very slippery. Once he was seated, the slant-eyed man hopped up behind him, leaving the lean yak to be led northward toward the ring of carven mountains by one of the incredible bird colossi.

There now followed a hideous whirl through frigid space, endlessly up and eastward toward the gaunt grey flanks of those impassable mountains beyond which Leng was said to be. Far above the clouds they flew, till at last there lay beneath them those fabled summits which the folk of Inquanok have never seen, and which lie always in high vortices of gleaming mist. Carter beheld them very plainly as they passed below, and saw upon their topmost peaks strange caves which made him think of those on Ngranek; but he did not question his captor about these things when he noticed that both the man and the horse-headed Shantak appeared oddly fearful of them, hurrying past nervously and shewing great tension until they were left far in the rear.

The Shantak now flew lower, revealing beneath the canopy of cloud a grey barren plain whereon at great distances shone little feeble fires. As they descended there appeared at intervals lone huts of granite and bleak stone villages whose tiny windows glowed with pallid light. And there came from those huts and villages a shrill droning of pipes and a nauseous rattle of crotala which proved at once that Inquanok's people are right in their geographic rumours. For travellers have heard such sounds before, and know that they float only from that cold desert plateau which healthy folk never visit, that haunted place of evil and mystery which is Leng.

Around the feeble fires dark forms were dancing, and Carter was curious as to what manner of beings they might be; for no healthy folk have ever been to Leng, and the place is known only by its fires and stone huts as seen from afar. Very slowly and awkwardly did those forms leap, and with an insane twisting and bending not good to behold; so that Carter did not wonder at the monstrous evil imputed to them by vague legend, or the fear in which all dreamland holds their abhorrent frozen plateau. As the Shantak flew lower, the repulsiveness of the dancers became tinged with a certain hellish familiarity; and the prisoner kept straining his eyes and racking his memory for clues to where he had seen such creatures before.

They leaped as though they had hooves instead of feet, and seemed to wear a sort of wig or headpiece with small horns. Of other clothing they had none, but most of them were quite furry. Behind they had dwarfish tails, and when they glanced upward he saw the excessive width of their mouths. Then he knew what they were, and that they did not wear any wigs or headpieces after all. For the cryptic folk of Leng were of one race with the uncomfortable merchants of the black galleys that traded rubies at Dylath-Leen, those not quite human merchants who are the slaves of the monstrous moon-things! They were indeed the same dark folk who had shanghaied Carter on their noisome galley so long ago, and whose kith he had seen driven in herds about the unclean wharves of that accursed lunar city, with the leaner ones toiling and the fatter ones taken away in crates for other needs of their polypous and amorphous masters. Now he saw where such ambiguous creatures came from, and shuddered at the thought that Leng must be known to these formless abominations from the moon.

But the Shantak flew on past the fires and the stone huts and the less than human dancers, and soared over sterile hills of grey granite and dim wastes of rock and ice and snow. Day came, and the phosphorescence of low clouds gave place to the misty twilight of that northern world, and still the vile bird winged meaningly through the cold and silence. At times the slant-eyed man talked with his steed in a hateful and gutteral language, and the Shantak would answer with tittering tones that rasped like the scratching of ground glass. All this while the land was getting higher, and finally they came to a wind-swept table-land which seemed the very roof of a blasted and tenantless world. There, all alone in the hush and the dusk and the cold, rose the uncouth stones of a squat windowless building, around which a circle of crude monoliths stood. In all this arrangement there was nothing human, and Carter surmised from old tales that he was indeed come to that most dreadful and legendary of all places, the remote and prehistoric monastery wherein dwells uncompanioned the High-Priest not to be described, which wears a yellow silken mask over its face and prays to the Other Gods and their crawling chaos, Nyarlathotep.

The loathsome bird now settled to the ground, and the slant-eyed man hopped down and helped his captive alight. Of the purpose of his seizure Carter now felt very sure; for clearly the

slant-eyed merchant was an agent of the darker powers, eager to drag before his masters a mortal whose presumption had aimed at the finding of unknown Kadath and the saying of a prayer before the faces of the Great Ones in their onyx castle. It seemed likely that this merchant had caused his former capture by the slaves of the moon-things in Dylath-Leen, and that he now meant to do what the rescuing cats had baffled; taking the victim to some dread rendezvous with monstrous Nyarlathotep and telling with what boldness the seeking of unknown Kadath had been tried. Leng and the cold waste north of Inquanok must be close to the Other Gods, and there the passes to Kadath are well guarded.

The slant-eyed man was small, but the great hippocephalic bird was there to see he was obeyed; so Carter followed where he led, and passed within the circle of standing rocks and into the low arched doorway of that windowless stone monastery. There were no lights inside, but the evil merchant lit a small clay lamp bearing morbid bas-reliefs and prodded his prisoner on through mazes of narrow winding corridors. On the walls of the corridors were painted frightful scenes older than history, and in a style unknown to the archaeologists of earth. After countless aeons their pigments were brilliant still, for the cold and dryness of hideous Leng keep alive many primal things. Carter saw them fleetingly in the rays of that dim and moving lamp, and shuddered at the tale they told.

Through those archaic frescoes Leng's annals stalked; and the horned, hooved and wide-mouthed almost-humans danced evilly amidst forgotten cities. There were scenes of old wars, wherein Leng's almost-humans fought with the bloated purple spiders of the neighboring vales; and there were scenes also of the coming of the black galleys from the moon, and of the submission of Leng's people to the polypous and amorphous blasphemies that hopped and floundered and wriggled out of them. Those slippery greyish-white blasphemies they worshipped as gods, nor ever complained when scores of their best and fatted males were taken away in the black galleys. The monstrous moon-beasts made their camp on a jagged isle in the sea, and Carter could tell from the frescoes that this was none other than the lone nameless rock he had seen when sailing to Inquanok; that grey accursed rock which Inquanok's seamen shun, and from which vile howlings reverberate all through the night.

And in those frescoes was shewn the great seaport and capital of the almost-humans; proud and pillared betwixt the cliffs and the basalt wharves, and wondrous with high fanes and carven places. Great gardens and columned streets led from the cliffs and from each of the six sphinx-crowned gates to a vast central plaza, and in that plaza was a pair of winged colossal lions guarding the top of a subterrene staircase. Again and again were those huge winged lions shewn, their mighty flanks of diarite glistening in the grey twilight of the day and the cloudy phosporescence of the night. And as Carter stumbled past their frequent and repeated pictures it came to him at last what indeed they were, and what city it was that the almost-humans had ruled so anciently before the coming of the black galleys. There could be no mistake, for the legends of dreamland are generous and profuse. Indubitably that primal city was no less a place than storied Sarkomand, whose ruins had bleached for a million years before the first true human saw the light, and whose titan lions guard eternally the steps that lead down from dreamland to the Great Abyss.

Other views shewed the gaunt grey peaks dividing Leng from Inquanok, and the monstrous Shantak-birds that build nests on the ledges half way up. And they shewed likewise the curious caves near the very topmost pinnacles, and how even the boldest of the Shantaks fly screaming away from them. Carter had seen those caves when he passed over them, and had noticed their likeness to the caves on Ngranek. Now he knew that the likeness was more than a chance one, for in these pictures were shewn their fearsome denizens; and those bat-wings, curving horns, barbed tails, prehensile paws and rubbery bodies were not strange to him. He had met those silent, flitting and clutching creatures before; those mindless guardians of the Great Abyss whom even the Great Ones fear, and who own not Nyarlathotep but hoary Nodens as their lord. For they were the dreaded night-gaunts, who never laugh or smile because they have no faces, and who flop unendingly in the dark betwixt the Vale of Pnath and the passes to the outer world.

The slant-eyed merchant had now prodded Carter into a great domed space whose walls were carved in shocking bas-reliefs, and whose centre held a gaping circular pit surrounded by six malignly stained stone altars in a ring. There was no light in this vast evil-smelling crypt, and the small lamp of the sinister

merchant shone so feebly that one could grasp details only little by little. At the farther end was a high stone dais reached by five steps; and there on a golden throne sat a lumpish figure robed in yellow silk figured with red and having a yellow silken mask over its face. To this being the slant-eyed man made certain signs with his hands, and the lurker in the dark replied by raising a disgustingly carven flute of ivory in silk-covered paws and blowing certain loathsome sounds from beneath the flowing yellow mask. This colloquy went on for some time, and to Carter there was something sickeningly familiar in the sound of that flute and the stench of the malodorous place. It made him think of a frightful red-litten city and of the revolting procession that once filed through it; of that, and of an awful climb through lunar countryside beyond, before the rescuing rush of earth's friendly cats. He knew that the creature on the dais was without doubt the high-priest not to be described, of which legend whispers such fiendish and abnormal possibilities, but he feared to think just what that abhorred high-priest might be.

Then the figured silk slipped a trifle from one of the greyish-white paws, and Carter knew what the noisome high-priest was. And in that hideous second stark fear drove him to something his reason would never have dared to attempt, for in all his shaken consciousness there was room only for one frantic will to escape from what squatted on that golden throne. He knew that hopeless labyrinths of stone lay betwixt him and the cold table-land outside, and that even on that table-land the noxious Shantak still waited; yet in spite of all this there was in his mind only the instant need to get away from that wriggling, silk-robed monstrosity.

The slant-eyed man had set his curious lamp upon one of the high and wickedly stained altar-stones by the pit, and had moved forward somewhat to talk to the high-priest with his hands. Carter, hitherto wholly passive, now gave that man a terrific push with all the wild strength of fear, so that the victim toppled at once into the gaping well which rumour holds to reach down to the hellish Vaults of Zin where gugs hunt shasts in the dark. In almost the same second he seized the lamp from the altar and darted out into the frescoed labyrinths, racing this way and that as chance determined and trying not to think of the stealthy padding of shapeless paws on the stones behind him, or of the

silent wrigglings and crawlings which must be going on back there in lightless corridors.

After a few moments he regretted his thoughtless haste, and wished he had tried to follow backward the frescoes he had passed on the way in. True, they were so confused and duplicated that they could not have done him much good, but he wished none the less he had made the attempt. Those he now saw were even more horrible than those he had seen then, and he knew he was not in the corridors leading outside. In time he became quite sure he was not followed, and slackened his pace somewhat; but scarce had he breathed in half relief when a new peril beset him. His lamp was waning, and he would soon be in pitch blackness with no means of sight or guidance.

When the light was all gone he groped slowly in the dark, and prayed to the Great Ones for such help as they might afford. At times he felt the stone floor sloping up or down, and once he stumbled over a step for which no reason seemed to exist. The farther he went the damper it seemed to be, and when he was able to feel a junction or the mouth of a wide passage he always chose the way which sloped downward the least. He believed, though, that his general course was down; and the vault-like smell and incrustations on the greasy walls and floor alike warned him he was burrowing deep into Leng's unwholesome table-land. But there was not any warning of the thing which came at last; only the thing itself with its terror and shock and breath-taking chaos. One moment he was groping slowly over the slippery floor of an almost level place, and the next he was shooting dizzily downward in the dark through a burrow which must have been well-nigh vertical.

Of the length of that hideous sliding he could never be sure, but it seemed to take hours of delirious nausea and ecstatic frenzy. Then he realized he was still, with the phosphorescent clouds of a northern night shining sickly above him. All around were crumbling walls and broken columns, and the pavement on which he lay was pierced by straggling grass and wrenched asunder by frequent shrubs and roots. Behind him a basalt cliff rose topless and perpendicular; its dark side sculptured into repellent scenes, and pierced by an arched and carven entrance to the inner blacknesses out of which he had come. Ahead stretched double rows of pillars, and the fragments and pedestals of pillars, that spoke of a broad and bygone street; and from the urns and basins along

the way he knew it had been a great street of gardens. Far off at its end the pillars spread to mark a vast round plaza, and in that open circle there loomed gigantic under the lurid night clouds a pair of monstrous things. Huge winged lions of diarite they were, with blackness and shadows between them. Full twenty feet they reared their grotesque and unbroken heads, and snarled derisive on the ruins around them. And Carter knew right well what they must be, for legends tell of only one such twain. They were the changeless guardians of the Great Abyss, and these dark ruins were in truth primordial Sarkomand.

Carter's first act was to close and barricade the archway in the cliff with fallen blocks and odd debris that lay around. He wished no follower from Leng's hateful monastery, for along the way ahead would lurk enough of other dangers. Of how to get from Sarkomand to the peopled parts of dreamland he knew nothing at all; nor could he gain much by descending to the grottoes of the ghouls, since he knew they were no better informed than he. The three ghouls which had helped him through the city of gugs to the outer world had not known how to reach Sarkomand in their journey back, but had planned to ask old traders in Dylath-Leen. He did not like to think of going to the subterrane world of gugs and risking once more that hellish tower of Koth with its Cyclopean steps leading to the enchanted wood, yet he felt he might have to try this course if all else failed. Over Leng's plateau past the lone monastery he dared not go unaided; for the high-priest's emissaries must be many, while at the journey's end there would no doubt be the Shantaks and perhaps other things to deal with. If he could get a boat he might sail back to Inquanok past the jagged and hideous rock in the sea, for the primal frescoes in the monastery labyrinth had shewn that this frightful place lies not far from Sarkomand's basalt quays. But to find a boat in this aeon-deserted city was no probable thing, and it did not appear likely that he could ever make one.

Such were the thoughts of Randolph Carter when a new impression began beating upon his mind. All this while there had stretched below him the great corpse-like width of fabled Sarkomand with its black pillars and crumbling sphinx-crowned gates and titan stones and monstrous winged lions against the sickly glow of those luminous night clouds. Now he saw far ahead and on the right a glow that no clouds could account for, and knew he was not alone in the silence of that dead city. The glow

rose and fell fitfully, flickering with a greenish tinge which did not reassure the watcher. And when he crept closer, down the littered street and through some narrow gaps between tumbling walls, he perceived that it was a campfire near the wharves with many vague forms clustered darkly around it, and a lethal odour hanging heavily over all. Beyond was the oily lapping of the harbour water with a great ship riding at anchor, and Carter paused in stark terror when he saw that the ship was indeed one of the dreaded black galleys from the moon.

Then, just as he was about to creep back from that detestable flame, he saw a stirring among the vague dark forms and heard a peculiar and unmistakable sound. It was the frightening meeping of a ghoul, and in a moment it had swelled to a veritable chorus of anguish. Secure as he was in the shadow of monstrous ruins, Carter allowed his curiosity to conquer his fear, and crept forward again instead of retreating. Once in crossing an open street he wriggled worm-like on his stomach, and in another place he had to rise to his feet to avoid making a noise among heaps of fallen marble. But always he succeeded in avoiding discovery, so that in a short time he had found a spot behind a titan pillar where he could watch the whole green-litten scene of action. There around a hideous fire fed by the obnoxious stems of lunar fungi, there squatted a stinking circle of the toadlike moonbeasts and their almost human slaves. Some of these slaves were heating curious iron spears in the leaping flames, and at intervals applying their white-hot points to three tightly trussed prisoners that lay writhing before the leaders of the party. From the motions of their tenacles Carter could see that the blunt-snouted moonbeasts were enjoying the spectacle hugely, and vast was his horror when he suddenly recognised the frantic meeping and knew that the tortured ghouls were none other than the faithful trio which had guided him safely from the Abyss, and had thereafter set out from the enchanted wood to find Sarkomand and the gate to their native deeps.

The number of malodorous moonbeasts about that greenish fire was very great, and Carter saw that he could do nothing now to save his former allies. Of how the ghouls had been captured he could not guess; but fancied that the grey toadlike blasphemies had heard them inquire in Dylath-Leen concerning the way to Sarkomand and had not wished them to approach so closely the hateful plateau of Leng and the high-priest not to be described.

For a moment he pondered on what he ought to do, and recalled how near he was to the gate of the ghoul's kingdom. Clearly it was wisest to creep east to the plaza of twin lions and descend at once to the gulf, where assuredly he would meet no horrors worse than those above, and where he might soon find ghouls eager to rescue their brethren and perhaps to wipe out the moonbeasts from the black galley. It occurred to him that the portal like other gates to the abyss, might be guarded by flocks of night-gaunts; but he did not fear these faceless creatures now. He had learned that they are bound by solemn treaties with the ghouls, and the ghoul which was Pickman had taught him how to glibber a password they understood.

So Carter began another silent crawl through the ruins, edging slowly toward the great central plaza and the winged lions. It was ticklish work, but the moonbeasts were pleasantly busy and did not hear the slightest noises which he twice made by accident among the scattered stones. At last he reached the open space and picked his way among the stunted trees and vines that had grown up therein. The gigantic lions loomed terrible above him in the sickly glow of the phosphorescent night clouds, but he manfully persisted toward them and presently crept round to their faces, knowing it was on that side he would find the mighty darkness which they guard. Ten feet apart crouched the mocking-faced beasts of diarite, brooding on Cyclopean pedestals whose sides were chiselled in fearsome bas-reliefs. Betwixt them was a tiled court with a central space which had once been railed with balusters of onyx. Midway in this space a black well opened, and Carter soon saw that he had indeed reached the yawning gulf whose crusted and mouldy stone steps lead down to the crypts of nightmare.

Terrible is the memory of that dark descent in which hours wore themselves away whilst Carter wound sightlessly round and round down a fathomless spiral of steep and slippery stairs. So worn and narrow were the steps, and so greasy with the ooze of inner earth, that the climber never quite knew when to expect a breathless fall and hurtling down to the ultimate pits; and he was likewise uncertain just when or how the guardian night-gaunts would suddenly pounce upon him, if indeed there were any stationed in this primeval passage. All about him was a stifling odour of nether gulfs, and he felt that the air of these choking depths was not made for mankind. In time he became very numb

and somnolent, moving more from automatic impulse than from reasoned will; nor did he realize any change when he stopped moving altogether as something quietly seized him from behind. He was flying very rapidly through the air before a malevolent tickling told him that the rubbery night-gaunts had performed their duty.

Awakened to the fact that he was in the cold, damp clutch of the faceless flutterers, Carter remembered the password of the ghouls and glibbered it as loudly as he could amidst the wind and chaos of flight. Mindless though night-gaunts are said to be, the effect was instantaneous; for all tickling stopped at once, and the creatures hastened to shift their captive to a more comfortable position. Thus encouraged, Carter ventured some explanations; telling of the seizure and torture of three ghouls by the moonbeasts, and of the need of assembling a party to rescue them. The night-gaunts, though inarticulate, seemed to understand what was said; and shewed greater haste and purpose in their flight. Suddenly the dense blackness gave place to the grey twilight of inner earth, and there opened up ahead one of those flat sterile plains on which ghouls love to squat and gnaw. Scattered tombstones and osseous fragments told of the denizens of that place; and as Carter gave a loud meep of urgent summons, a score of burrows emptied forth their leathery, dog-like tenants. The night-gaunts now flew low and set their passenger upon his feet, afterward withdrawing a little and forming a hunched semicircle on the ground while the ghouls greeted the newcomer.

Carter glibbered his message rapidly and explicitly to the grotesque company, and four of them at once departed through different burrows to spread the news to others and gather such troops as might be available for a rescue. After a long wait a ghoul of some importance appeared, and made significant signs to the night-gaunts, causing two of the latter to fly off into the dark. Thereafter there were constant accessions to the hunched flock of night-gaunts on the plain, till at length the slimy soil was fairly black with them. Meanwhile fresh ghouls crawled out of the burrows one by one, all glibbering excitedly and forming a crude battle array not far from the huddled night-gaunts. In time there appeared that proud and influential ghoul which was once the artist Richard Pickman of Boston, and to him Carter glibbered a very full account of what had occurred. The erstwhile Pickman, pleased to greet his ancient friend again,

seemed very much impressed, and held a conference with other chiefs a little apart from the growing throng.

Finally, after scanning the ranks with care, the assembled chiefs all meeped in unison and began glibbering orders to the crowds of ghouls and night-gaunts. A large detachment of the horned flyers vanished at once, while the rest grouped themselves two by two on their knees with extended forelegs, awaiting the approach of the ghouls one by one. As each ghoul reached the pair of night-gaunts to which he was assigned, he was taken up and borne away into the blackness, till at last the whole throng had vanished save for Carter, Pickman, and the other chiefs, and a few pairs of night-gaunts. Pickman explained that night gaunts are the advance guard and battle steeds of the ghouls, and that the army was issuing forth to Sarkomand to deal with the moonbeasts. Then Carter and the ghoulish chiefs approached the waiting bearers and were taken up by the damp, slippery paws. Another moment and all were whirling in wind and darkness, endlessly up, up, up to the gate of the winged lions and the spectral ruins of primal Sarkomand.

When, after a great interval, Carter saw again the sickly light of Sarkomand's nocturnal sky, it was to behold the great central plaza swarming with militant ghouls and night-gaunts. Day, he felt sure, must be almost due; but so strong was the army that no surprise of the enemy would be needed. The greenish flare near the wharves still glimmered faintly, though the absence of ghoulish meeping shewed that the torture of the prisoners was over for the nonce. Softly glibbering directions to their steeds and to the flock of riderless night-gaunts ahead, the ghouls presently rose in wide whirring columns and swept over the bleak ruins toward the evil flame. Carter was now beside Pickman in the front rank of ghouls, and saw as they approached the noisome camp that the moonbeasts were totally unprepared. The three prisoners lay bound and inert beside the fire. The almost-human slaves were asleep, even the sentinels shirking a duty which in this realm must have seemed to them merely perfunctory.

The final swoop of the night-gaunts and mounted ghouls was very sudden, each of the greyish toadlike blasphemies and their almost-human slaves being seized by a group of night-gaunts before a sound was made. The moonbeasts, of course, were voiceless; and even the slaves had little chance to scream before

rubbery paws choked them into silence. Horrible were the writhing of those great jellyish abnormalities as the sardonic night-gaunts clutched them, but nothing availed against the strength of those black prehensile talons. When a moonbeast writhed too violently, a night-gaunt would seize and pull its quivering tentacles; which seemed to hurt so much that the victim would cease its struggles. Carter expected to see much slaughter, but found that the ghouls were far subtler in their plans. They glibbered certain simple orders to the night-gaunts which held the captives trusting the rest to instinct; and soon the hapless creatures were born silently away into the Great Abyss, to be distributed impartially amongst the dholes, gugs, ghasts and other dwellers in darkness whose modes of nourishment are not painless to their chosen victims. Meanwhile the three bound ghouls had been released and consoled by their conquering kinsfolk, whilst various parties searched the neighbourhood for possible remaining moonbeasts, and boarded the evil-smelling black galley at the wharf to make sure that nothing had escaped the general defeat. Surely enough, the capture had been thorough, for not a sign of further life could the victors detect. Carter, anxious to preserve a means of access to the rest of dreamland, urged them not to sink the anchored galley; and this request was freely granted out of gratitude for his act in reporting the plight of the captured trio. On the ship were found some very curious objects and decorations, some of which Carter cast at once into the sea.

Ghouls and night-gaunts now formed themselves in separate groups, the former questioning their rescued fellows anent past happenings. It appeared that the three had followed Carter's directions and proceeded from the enchanted wood to Dylath-Leen by way of Nir and the Skai, stealing human clothes at a lonely farmhouse and loping as closely as possible in the fashion of a man's walk. In Dylath-Leen's taverns their grotesque ways and faces had aroused much comment; but they had persisted in asking the way to Sarkomand until at last an old traveller was able to tell them. Then they knew that only a ship for Lelag-Leng would serve their purpose, and prepared to wait patiently for such a vessel.

But evil spies had doubtless reported much; for shortly a black galley put into port, and wide-mouthed ruby merchants invited the ghouls to drink with them in a tavern. Wine was

produced from one of those sinister bottles grotesquely carven from a single ruby, and after that the ghouls found themselves prisoners on the black galley as Carter had once found himself. This time, however, the unseen rowers steered not for the moon but for antique Sarkomand; bent evidently on taking their captives before the high-priest not to be described. They had touched at the jagged rock in the northern sea which Inquanok's mariners shun, and the ghouls had there seen for the first time the red masters of the ship; being sickened despite their own callousness by such extremes of malign shapelessness and fearsome odour. There, too, were witnessed the nameless pastimes of the toadlike resident garrison—such pastimes as give rise to the night-howlings which men fear. After that had come the landing at ruined Saromand and the beginning of the tortures, whose continuance the present rescue had prevented.

Future plans were next discussed, the three rescued ghouls suggesting a raid on the jagged rock and the extermination of the toadlike garrison there. To this, however, the night-gaunts objected; since the prospect of flying over water did not please them. Most of the ghouls favoured the design, but were at a loss how to follow it without the help of the winged night-gaunts. Thereupon Carter, seeing that they could not navigate the anchored galley, offered to teach them the use of the great banks of oars; to which proposal they eagerly assented. Grey day had now come, and under that leaden northern sky a picked detachment of ghouls filed into the noisome ship and took their seats on the rower's benches. Carter found them fairly apt at learning, and before night had risked several experimental trips around the harbour. Not till three days later, however, did he deem it safe to attempt the voyage of conquest. Then, the rowthe party set sail at last; Pickman and the other chiefs gathering on deck and discussing modes of approach and procedure.

On the very first night the howlings from the rock were heard. Such was their timbre that all the galley's crew shook visibly; but most of all trembled the three rescued ghouls who knew precisely what those howlings meant. It was not thought best to attempt an attack by night, so the ship lay to under the phosphorescent clouds to wait for the dawn of a greyish day. When the light was ample and the howlings still the rowers resumed their strokes, and the galley drew closer and closer to that jagers trained and the night-gaunts safely stowed in the forecastle,

ged rock whose granite pinnacles clawed fantastically at the dull sky. The sides of the rock were very steep; but on ledges here and there could be seen the bulging walls of queer windowless dwellings, and the low railings guarding travelled highroads. No ship of men had ever come so near the place, or at least, had never come so near and departed again; but Carter and the ghouls were void of fear and kept inflexibly on, rounding the eastern face of the rock and seeking the wharves which the rescued trio described as being on the southern side within a harbour formed of steep headlands.

The headlands were prolongations of the island proper, and came so closely together that only one ship at a time might pass between them. There seemed to be no watchers on the outside, so the galley was steered boldly through the flume-like strait and into the stagnant putrid harbour beyond. Here, however, all was bustle and activity; with several ships lying at anchor along a forbidding stone quay, and scores of almost-human slaves and moonbeasts by the waterfront handling crates and boxes or driving nameless and fabulous horrors hitched to lumbering lorries. There was a small stone town hewn out of the vertical cliff above the wharves, with the start of a winding road that spiralled out of sight toward higher ledges of the rock. Of what lay inside that prodigious peak of granite none might say, but the things one saw on the outside were far from encouraging.

(to be concluded)

BOOKS OF THE QUARTER

DR. KELLER'S STORIES

LIFE EVERLASTING AND OTHER TALES OF SCIENCE, FANTASY, AND HORROR, by David H. Keller. Collected by Sam Mosowitz and Will Sykora. With a Critical and Biographical Introduction by Sam Moskowtiz. The Avalon Company, Newark, New Jersey. 382 pp., $3.50.

The first collection of the stories of Dr. David H. Keller is an interesting hodge-podge, leading off with a short science-fiction novel, *Life Everlasting,* and continuing with ten shorter stories, in which the emphasis is on psychological horror. It is this field, rather than the more usual veins of the macabre, which Dr. Keller explores almost to the exclusion of others; and it is in this field that his greatest distinction obviously lies, for such stories as *A Piece of Linoleum, The Face in the Mirror, Heredity, The Dead Woman,* and that little gem from *Weird Tales, The Thing in the Cellar,* represent Dr. Keller at his best.

His best is not, as Mr. Moskowitz in zealous but hardly critical enthusiasm suggests in his foreword, akin to literature, and it is scarcely assured of any permanence, but it is undeniably entertaining and often novel enough to justify this publication and others. Most of the stories are written with a simple directness, but lack style, being often singularly barren of all but the central effect desired by the author. Yet one feels throughout this book a tremendous sincerity and earnestness, giving credence to the lifelong struggle to become a writer of some meaning and significance to which Mr. Moskowitz pays tribute.

For many years, Dr. Keller was a leading writer of science-fiction, but his work has not been confined to that field, and even in that field it leaned heavily on fantasy, as such a story as *The Boneless Horror* clearly demonstrates. This tale is a curious admixture of allegory, science-fiction, and fantasy; yet it is successful within its self-imposed boundaries. Allegory, indeed, is often utilized by Dr. Keller, and there are likewise occasional flashes of humor, but not many.

Despite their flaws, however—and, apart from stylistic flaws, there are such others as a barrenness of memorable characterization, an inadequate detail structure—these stories by Dr. Keller command a certain admiration, and the Avalon Company deserves thanks for having made this book available. It is quite

clear that the selection of the tales to be included was not very skillfully done; one is convinced that there are other and better tales by David Keller which might have been included in place of such relatively less important titles as the short novel, for instance. Yet there is perhaps less reason for quibbling than for applauding, for any collection of Dr. Keller's tales is far better than none at all, and one can even overlook such manifest absurdities as Mr. Moskowitz's grandoise suggestion that Dr. Keller's Taine of San Francisco is akin to Sherlock Holmes.

Aficionados will certainly want to own this collection. It is handsomely bound and stamped, and adequately printed, and it is well worth the asking price. Such flaws as it has are easily overbalanced by the excellence of such stories as *The Thing in the Cellar* and *The Dead Woman,* in which Dr. Keller's psychiatric experiences clearly prove of marked help to his writing abilities.

—JOHN HALEY

WIT AND SATIRE

THE PREVALENCE OF WTICHES, by Aubrey Menen. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. 271 pages, $2.75.

A selection of the Reviewers' Panel, this witty and clever book is yet on the borderline of fantasy, and it is the kind of book which lovers of the genre ought to see more often. Deftly written, beautifully compact, with memorable characters, it is a satire on modern civilization that comes close to being in the great tradition of English satirical literature.

The story takes place in a section of India called Limbo, into which "the grimy paw of civilization" has not yet reached. Under the British civil law, a Limbodian chieftain is accused of murder, though in Limbodian eyes he has merely rid his community of a particularly obnoxious old woman whom everyone knows to be a witch. Three highly educated Britons, an American missionary, and a fake Swami get together determined to see that justice is done in accordance not with British civil law but with the beliefs of Limbo. In order to do so, they must rationalize the native religion, which they do at the expense of a great many cherished ideas firmly upheld by many civilized people.

The result of Mr. Menen's examination of the religious and social mores of our society is wholly delightful. *The Prevalence*

of Witches is filled with quaint tales which the lover of fantasy will enjoy; these occur along with and as an integral part of the central story, and add color and flavor to this whimsy. Altogether too few such books are offered the reading public these days, and it is gratifying that the work has been given the added impetus of increased sales due to its selection by the Reviewers' Panel.

—August Derleth

STUDIES IN MURDER

MURDER: PLAIN AND FANCIFUL, Written by Divers Hands and gathered here by James Sandoe. Sheridan House, New York. 628 pages, $3.50.

THE MURDER OF MARIA MARTEN, Compiled by J. Curtis. Edited and arranged by Jeanne and Norman Mackenzie. Pellegrini & Cudahy, New York. 256 pages, $3.75.

It is not our intention to make a practice of taking notice of ordinary mystery fare in these pages; but there are times when every rule can safely be disregarded, and in regard to these two books, we consider that we would be remiss in the purpose of this department if we did not at least publish some notice of them.

Mr. Sandoe's collection is beyond question one of the best in the field—and this is already an overcrowded field, with many fine anthologies. His book is divided into four parts, each of equal interest to the connoisseur of crime. Its first section is given over to a contemplation of a dozen famous crimes, set down here by Thomas Burke, Sir Edward Clarke, Janet Flanner, Felix Frankfurter, F. Tennyson Jesse, Raymond Postgate, William Roughead, and Henry D. Thoreau, among others. Its second section consists of but three tales based on true crimes; they are by Miriam Allen DeFord, Lillian de la Torre, and Melville Davisson Post. Its third section is of fiction concerning crime, thirteen tales, among which are stories by Ludwig Bemelmans, Ernest Bramah, C. Daly King, Milward Kennedy, and others—and among these others is a little crime classic from the pages of *Astounding Science-Fiction,* Anthony Boucher's *Elsewhen.* Its final portion is entitled *Criminal Clef,* and consists of an expert list of tales and plays based on real crimes, prepared by James Sandoe, and of an index to cases and persons cited. All in all, it would be difficult indeed to find a more satisfying

or better-rounded anthology than Mr. Sandoe's, and we urge all those readers who can take pleasure in studies of crime, real and fanciful, to add this excellent anthology to their collections.

The Murder of Maria Marten, familiarly known as "The Red Barn Murder" or "Murder in the Red Barn," is definitely a story of crime which has its appeal to the *aficionado* of the supernatural, for the murder of the unfortunate girl was disclosed in a dream, occurring three times to her stepmother, and leading to the apprehension and execution of the murderer. Doubtless many readers are familiar with the details of this commonplace crime which has become a classic of its kind—the romantic simplicity of the poor deluded girl, Maria Marten, flying into the arms of her seducer, William Corder, in the belief that she was to be wed, only to be murdered and buried under a red barn in the vicinity; the stepmother's vivid and strange dream, setting forth such details as could be known only to the murderer; his arrest, conviction, and death.

But what is not generally know is that one J. Curtis, employed by the London *Times,* was sent to investigate and write about the crime and all that followed thereafter. What James Curtis wrote is now seen, after more than a century, to be the best account extant of the murder of Maria Marten. For the present publication—its first in more than a hundred years—the editors have pruned it carefully, put it in proper order, and supplied illustrations of the period, making it the very best account of this classic crime available to the collector. Though the book is somewhat over-priced, it is no less excellent, and no *aficionado* will want to miss this fine book.

—August Derleth

GREMLINS

SOMETIME NEVER, By Roald Dahl. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. 244 pages, $2.75.

When you begin to read *Sometime Never,* you think that Roald Dahl has written just a delightful fantasy of the R.A.F. and those high-flying pests the Irish fliers imported from the Ould Sod—the Gremlins. The description of the Battle of Britain waged by the airmen, not only against the Messerschmitts, but also against the little inhuman creatures that liked to drill holes in their planes, is told with color and wit. One is amused rather

than alarmed by hero Peternip's first sight of a Gremlin, even though the green bowler hat worn by the imp gives the pilot the shakes! But, reading further, you sense more than a pleasant drollery in this book. It begins to shape up as a bitter, hard-bitten satire, in places as devastatingly unflattering as Swift's, of man and his incredible appetite for war. The Gremlins, who loathe man, are just waiting, in their underground burrows and tunnels, for man to knock himself out in the next war, after which, their dictatorial leader tells them, they will take over the Earth—what's left of it. They do not have long to wait, for World War III kills off most of the human race by atomic bombing, and then comes World War IV which, waged with a weapon that drives men insane, really finishes mankind. On a world reduced to cinders, the Gremlins emerge, only to mysteriously disappear themselves before they have had time to settle down and start ruling.

The author has not troubled to tell us why the Gremlins, too, vanish from the world. Like old soldiers, they fade away, quite possibly because of what mankind managed to do to Earth before passing into history. This intriguing omission, however, does not detract from the book's worth. Dahl's savage descriptions of what an atomic and/or a bacteriological war would be like shadows John Hersey's report from Hiroshima. Nothing I have ever read of the effects of atom-bombing can touch these ferociously dreadful passages on the plane of fiction. They should be required reading for every statesman, dictator, and president in the world—while we still have a world.

—Leah Bodine Drake

SHORT NOTICES

GHOSTS ALONG THE MISSISSIPPI, by Clarence John Laughlin. 100 photographs and text. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. $10.00. Photographer Laughlin makes a spectacularly successful attempt to recapture the magic of the old houses of Louisiana in this fine collection of photographs. Because of several memorable "interpretations" with a wonderfully spectral effect, the book comes within the scope of this department. Such pictures as *The Spectral Fans, The Dark Lady, The Waters of Memory, The Head in the Ceiling, The Apparition,* and others are photographs

no lover of pictorial art of the macabre will soon forget. Recommended for the discriminating.

THE COLLECTED TALES OF A. E. COPPARD. Alfred A. Knopf, New York. 532 pages, $5.00. Though readers of Arkham House books will be familiar with all the Coppard tales of fantasy, collected in *Fearful Pleasures,* they may like a greater variety of stories by one of the world's greatest writers of short-stories. This selection contains 38 of the best, chosen from approximately 200 written between 1921 and 1938. A handsomely designed and printed volume.

STRANGE PREHISTORIC ANIMALS AND THEIR STORIES, by A. Hyatt Verrill. L. C. Page & Company, Boston. 262 pages, $3.75. Mr. Verrill's books in this field are well-known. This most recent title is a study of primitive animals in fact and legend, illustrated by the author. Here is data about sea serpents, dragons, idols, symbols, fish, reptiles, mammals, et al, their habitat, modes of existence, and their living descendents. Interesting and readable. See also Mr. Verill's *Strange Customs, Manners and Beliefs.*

DEL PALMA, by Pamela Kellino. E. P. Dutton & Company, New York. 254 pages, $2.75. Del Palma's new love, Silky Verity, becomes possessed by his dead wife, Cigale. Primarily a love story, this variation on the *Rebecca* theme is not up to the model, while interesting, is not compelling. Yet it is not without merit, and readers of the macabre in fiction may well like it, despite such hilarious names as Silky Verity, which probably stems from an over-romanticized imagination.

THE BLACK FLAME, by Stanley G. Weinbaum. Fantasy Press, Reading, Pennsylvania. 240 pages, $3.00. Here are two short novels, *Dawn of Flame* and *The Black Flame,* combined under the title of the latter. The late Stanley Weinbaum still has an enthusiastic and vocal following. He could always tell a good story, and these two short novels are no exception. But of literary merit he had virtually none. Typical of this book is this passage, come upon at random: "He lifted her slender waist in his mighty hand, circled it with his powerful fingers, and crushed it in a grasp like contracting steel." We submit that this is purple trite-

ness at its worst. However, those who enjoy good stories and do not mind bad writing, may well enjoy this new book attractively presented by Fantasy Press. One should note that the illustrations are likewise very bad, adding nothing whatsoever to the book.

SAC PRAIRIE PEOPLE, by August Derleth. Stanton & Lee, Sauk City. 320 pages, $3.00. Of the twenty stories in this collection, one novelette—*Where the Worm Dieth Not,* and one short story—*One Against the Dead,* contain elements of the supernatural. For the reader of fantasy exclusively, this percentage is not large enough to justify the investment. The balance of the book is made up of five highly personal romances we suspect are autobiographical (since the book is dedicated *For Certain Ladies*), a long romantic novelette, six hilariously funny stories, and a sampling of subtle tales of Wisconsin village life. For those readers who like any kind of good short story, however, a good buy. (Original publication during the last decade in *Redbook, Coronet, The American Mercury, Household, Scribner's Good Housekeeping,* etc.). Any reader who can keep a straight face during the reading of that examination of the sex life of a Wisconsin small town, *Ellie Butts,* will need to beg, borrow, or steal a sense of humor.

THE BOWL OF NIGHT, by Edward Liston. Coward-McCann, New York. 246 pages, $2.75. Novels suggestive of Rider Haggard and H. G. Wells do still come from the presses; this is one of them, though it ought not to be mistaken for a novel on the same plane. A doctor just out of service crashes his plane somewhere in South America, and finds himself in an inaccessible natural bowl where a race suggesting the Mayans exists free of contact from the outside world. As usual, the civilization is in some respects very advanced, and the *raison d'etre* for the novel exists primarily in the satire implicit in the contrast of this ancient and yet advanced civilization with our modern and yet backward civilization. But there is a romance, too, with the woman Shayli, which ultimately leads to the necessity for the doctor's escape. This is good reading in a familiar pattern by a man who has not done it before, and there is some pointed satire in his narrative. Good of its kind, it is likely to be satisfactory to most fantasy-lovers.

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY

A Sign of the Times?

We have speculated in recent months just how long it might be before the almost hysterical furore about the menace of the so-called comic books and of crime stories on radio and screen would extend to the elements of terror and horror in fantasy. We have long believed that the "menace" of comic strips and books which are in reality adventure-strips for the sub-moronic has been much over-emphasized, and that the influence of the radio and movies was also stressed often at the expense of reality. Without attempting to brief either side of the question, it has seemed to us that hysteria might quite readily spread to other fields. And lo! when we opened the pages of our esteemed contemporary, the *Literary Supplement* of the London *Times* for May 8 last, we came upon a leading editorial on Edgar Allan Poe, which concluded with this challenging line: "We should feel the safer while the *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* remain beyond the comprehension of the young barbarians." We invite our readers to enjoy the thus far imaginary spectacle of the police of say, Boston or Philadelphia, marching into the bookstores and seizing copies of the most recent issues of *Weird Tales, Astounding Science-Fiction, Famous Fantastic Magazine,* et al, together with the collected works of Poe, Wells, Lovecraft and other venerables in the field. We hope fervently that the imagination may never become the real.

Dubious Scholasticism

The Summer issue of another of our contemporaries, *The American Scholar,* organ of Phi Beta Kappa, no less, carried an article entitled *The Rise of Fantasy in Literature,* by Harrison Smith. Mr. Smith, one-time publisher, now associate-editor of the *Saturday Review of Literature,* is a critic, but unfortunately he lacks any special knowledge which would qualify him for the writing of this article. We recall that he wrote to us for books, but not particularly for information and, as a result, he was woefully misinformed by someone, as any reader of fantasy who saw the article in question doubtless learned.

An advance proof of the article, evidently sent too late for revisions to be effective, reached our desk last May. Judge our astonishment to find Mr. Smith writing howlers like this: *"Amazing Stories,* the earliest magazine devoted entirely to fantasy,

was created by Hugo Gernsback in 1926 . . ." and "One of the most fluent and creative of these writers developed by *Amazing Stories* is H. P. Lovecraft . . ." There were other things akin, and we sat down at once and wrote a lengthy letter to *The American Scholar,* together with a copy for Mr. Smith, and dispatched both by airmail. We quote from our letter:

"On page 308 Mr. Smith writes a grotesque error. He says that *Amazing Stories* was 'the earliest magazine devoted entirely to fantasy.' This magazine, which came out in 1926, might well be styled the earliest devoted entirely to *scientific* fantasy, but in point of fact, it was preceded by three years by a far more important magazine from a literary point-of-view; the first such magazine was *Weird Tales,* established in March, 1923. *Weird Tales* published both science-fiction and macabre fiction, though emphasizing the latter. Science-fiction, though published sparingly, was almost the only fiction to appear in the popular magazine, *Science and Invention,* which preceded *Amazing Stories* by some years; however, its science-fiction was rather more fantastic than scientific.

"On page 309, Mr. Smith commits another howler. He writes, 'One of the most fluent and creative of these writers developed by *Amazing Stories* is H. P. Lovecraft'. Now nothing could be more far from the facts. Mr. Lovecraft was almost exclusively the development of *Weird Tales. Amazing Stories* published only one story by Lovecraft, *The Colour Out of Space,* September 1927; *Astounding* published two, *The Shadow Out of Time,* and *At the Mountains of Madness. Weird Tales* published over 90% of the Lovecraft stories and poems, including *all* the stories Mr. Smith mentions and inadvertently credits to *Amazing Stories.*

"On Page 310 Mr. Smith make reference to 'the stories of . . . Algernon Blackwood, *The Doll and One Other,* have recently appeared in new editions.' The Coppard book, *Fearful Pleasures, is* a collection of macabre tales reprinted from earlier books; but *The Doll and One Other* is an original Arkham House publication, and *not* at all a reprint; these stories had never appeared in print prior to our publication of Mr. Blackwood's book."

One would have thought that every effort would have been made to correct these major errors. Even more, one would have thought that the editorial staff of *The American Scholar,* if such an article were desired, would have had the ordinary common sense to ask someone well established in the field to write it, and not apply to a man like Mr. Smith, who, with all due respect to his considerable abilities, has no special knowledge of fantasy in literature. One suspects that there is not as much scholasticism on the editorial staff of *The American Scholar* as there ought to be, and we are reminded of an old ditty—

Sometimes a Phi Beta Kappa key
Ain't what it's cracked up to be!

The Arkham Back List

At the end of May, A. E. Van Vogt's novel, *Slan,* went out of print, and in consequence no further copies of this title are available from Arkham House. At the same time it should be noted that less than 100 copies of Robert Bloch's *The Opener of the Way* and August Derleth's *Who Knocks?* remain in print, and that less than 200 copies of *Something Near,* also by August Derleth, remain to be sold. This information was duly contained in a bulletin sent out to our patrons in June, and at the same time announcement was made of the impending publication in a special limited edition, illustrated by Virgil Finlay, of Seabury Quinn's Novelette, *Roads,* in late autumn of this year.

It should be noted that the entire Arkham House back list is growing more slender. Arkham House editions have always been relatively small and their average life is something like two to three years. Thus, while the books previously mentioned will very soon be out of print, the following books, in order, are also in increasingly short supply—Frank Belknap Long's *The Hounds of Tindalos,* J. Sheridan LeFanu's *Green Tea and Other Ghost Stories,* August Derleth's *The Night Side,* the Lovecraft-Derleth novel, *The Lurker at the Threshold,* Robert E. Howard's *Skull Face and Others,* William Hope Hodgson's *The House on the Borderland and Other Novels,* August Derleth's *The Sleeping and the Dead,* and H. S. Whitehead's *West India Lights. Who Knocks?* is already out of print at its publishers, Rinehart & Company, and *The Night Side* will be out of print with Rinehart also in a very short time.

We dislike to seem to harp on the danger of Arkham House books going off sale, but we dislike even more the complaints of injured customers who sometimes think that we were remiss in not notifying them of the impending removal from sale of one title after another. *Slan* is now the 11th book to be published or distributed by Arkham House to go out of print; *Who Knocks?* will be the twelfth, followed by *The Opener of the Way.* Readers who do not own these titles, and who do intend to own them, should now lose no time in ordering them.

Support for Stanton & Lee: In Appreciation

We are gratified to report that an increasing number of Arkham House patrons have lent their support to the publishing ventures of Stanton & Lee. Repeatedly we have had the experience

of receiving a tentative order for *Evening in Spring* or *Country Growth,* somewhat dubiously sent, only to have the very pleasureable aftermath of orders for the entire Stanton & Lee and Scribner list. Our announcement of the publication August 2nd of August Derleth's new collection of serious stories, *Sac Prairie People,* which went out with our Arkham House bulletin of last month, brought in a surprisingly good response, particularly from those readers who had sampled the first collection, *Country Growth,* and liked the stories. All of which demonstrates, as we have always believed, that the patrons of Arkham House are by and large not a group of readers narrowly restricted in their tastes, but people who like good stories well told no matter what their subject.

Our Contributors

Ronald Clyne, our cover artist—and the creator of most Arkham House jackets—recently had the honor of having some of his jackets selected for exhibition in the first annual exhibition of the Book Jacket Designers Guild. Mr. Clyne, who is still a very young man, began his jacket work for Arkham House, but soon his skill and manifest creative artistry drew the attention of discriminating art department directors among larger publishers, and he was engaged to do as many jackets as he wished to undertake. At the same time he was drawn into the illustration of books, doing eleven full pages, four-colored line plate drawings, for the *Shorter Writing of Voltaire,* designed by Peter Oldenburg, and soon to be published by the Rodale Press. From among 250 jackets shown at the exhibit, Mr. Clyne had no less than four, a number exceeded only by two of the best-known designers in the field. We are delighted to take note of the rapid advancement of one of our contributors, having always had a high regard and appreciation for Ronald Clyne's talents. Among his recent jackets are those for *Civilization on Trial,* by Arnold Toynbee (Oxford), *Travel in America, by* Various Hands (Farrar Straus), and *The Fourth Book of Jorkens,* by Lord Dunsany (Arkham House).

H. Russell Wakefield remains among the few great writers in the genre of the macabre left to England, now that death has taken more of its great men from us. His story in this issue is one of a new series Mr. Wakefield is writing at the present time . . . Geraldine Wolf is a young New York poet, whose appear-

ance in these pages is not her first venture into print, by any means.

A. Reynolds Morse is waiting upon the publication of his comprehensive work, *The Works of M. P. Shiel: A Study of Bibliography,* which is scheduled for autumn publication by the Fantasy Publishing Company of Los Angeles. His contribution to this issue represents something he was not able to do for his book. "My original, involved and hopeful introduction to the book was replaced by one designed along quite conventional lines, and the chastened introduction was allowed to stand, for the book grew long, and there was so much other new material to be presented about the much-collected but little-known novelist," writes Mr. Morse. The publication of his paper at this time comes opportunely, for it precedes not only his own fine work, but also the appearance of the two coming reprints by Shiel—*Xelucha and Others,* a selection of his best short stories made by himself, with an introduction written especially for the book (Arkham House), and *Prince Zaleski and Cummings King Monk* (Mycroft & Moran).

Clark Ashton Smith is almost too well known to comment upon. He is the author of numerous collections of prose and poetry, all now out of print and much sought by collectors, and of two forthcoming short story collections—*Genius Loci and Other Tales* (Arkham House, Autumn 1948), and *The Abominations of Yondo* (coming later), as well as of a notable volume of *Selected Poems,* which is currently being assembled for ultimate publication by Arkham House. Meanwhile, he lives and works at his home in California, where he does his impressive sculptures. . . . . C. M. Eddy of Providence, Rhode Island, was a friend of the late H. P. Lovecraft's, and a writer in his own right, as early issues of *Weird Tales* will testify. His story in this issue is adequately introduced, and thus needs no further commentary here.

Samuel Loveman is one of the few remaining members of the old Kalem Klub, which included Lovecraft. Long a friend of Lovecraft's, Loveman knew him as few of his correspondents did. A poet and author himself (*The Hermaphrodite and Other Poems*), he is at present associated with the Bodley Book Shop of New York, and has had a considerable hand in the publication of a new and very fine appreciation and biography of the late poet, Hart Crane. . . . . Leah Bodine Drake is best known for

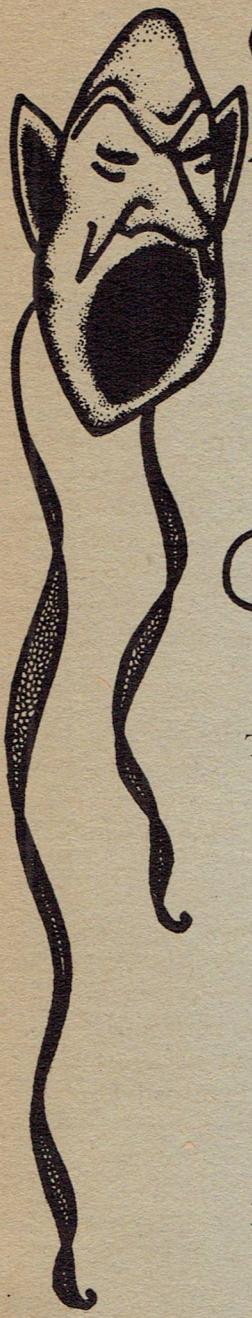
her delightful fantastic poetry, which has appeared in *Weird Tales* and other magazines for many years. While she has as yet published no book collection of her verse, she has every right to look forward to such publication ultimately. . . . . Norman Markham is a collector of odd facts in the manner of the late, great Charles Fort. His contributions have appeared in *Doubt* and other magazines.

Jottings

Just before his death last January, W. Paul Cook had the satisfaction of seeing his last book published. He wrote what he called "flat poems" under the pen-name of Willis T. Crossman, and these have been gathered into several volumes, the last of which is *Heard in Vermont,* a handsomely-bound and attractively printed book which is available from the Driftwind Press, North Montpelier, Vermont, at $3.00 the copy. Most of the Cook-Crossman earlier volumes are out of print; among collectors of regional American verse, the books are highly prized.

Leslie P. Hartley, who wrote *The Travelling Grave and Other Stories,* has won the coveted James Tait Black Memorial Prize for *Eustace and Hilda,* a novel published in 1947. This prize is given annually in England for the best novel of the year. The new collection of macabre tales, meanwhile, was recently made the June selection of the Fantasy Guild.

July 19 was set as publication date for *Tales of Horror and the Supernatural,* edited by Philip Van Doren Stern for publication by Alfred A. Knopf. The price, initially thought to be $5.00, was fixed at $3.95. . . . . A book in which some of our readers might well be interested in that it is the most thoroughgoing study known to have been made of an ancient civilization is *The Ancient Maya,* by Sylvanus G. Morley (Stanford University Press, $10.00).



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