

DIFFERENT

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Science Fiction and Fantasy Curiosa

"Curiosa" is a term that has become popular with secondhand and rare-volume book dealers connotating items that are off-beat or unusual, frequently not of great value but nevertheless of special interest because of light it may shed on something of importance or because it provides a new perspective or perhaps a footnote to some special individual or body of knowledge. The science fiction and fantasy field, like all fields, is rich in such items. I have been guilty of reprinting many of them in past issues of Different and elsewhere, with something less than enthusiastic response. I nevertheless persist because some of these items are of historical value and will certainly be useful to serious students of science fiction.

In this issue I present the following:

1. The complete text of a circular letter by The Solar Sales Service, the first literary agency specializing in science fiction. This circular, recruiting authors, was sent out after the agency was already in active operation. It would appear to have gone out in very late 1934 or very early 1935. The novel by John Taine referred to was Twelve Eighty Seven.
2. "Report of The First National Science Fiction Convention", held May 29, 1938 in Newark, N. J., is of special interest since if not the first, it was certainly one of the earliest general releases to fan magazines, pro magazines and newspapers sent out by a fan group. The circular was written by William S. Sykora, and this concise report of the convention has never appeared elsewhere.
3. The agenda and qualifications for membership of The Fantasy Writers' Guild, an abortive attempt to form science fiction writers into a "union" during the heyday of the science fiction boom. It failed after four or five fascinating meetings.
4. Clay Ferguson, Jr., was a remarkable young artist who did near-professional and highly popular work for the old Fantasy Magazine and William Crawford's Marvel Tales. Reproduced by photo-offset is a pencil drawing done on a crumbling piece of yellow paper. This illustration has never appeared in print before.
5. Reproduced by photo-offset is a review of Clark Ashton Smith's Ebony and Crystal by H. P. Lovecraft, published in a 1922

issue of a little-known poetry magazine. The review has never been reprinted and is something of a poem itself. Lovecraft sure laid it on.

6. Reproduced by photo-offset is a full-page advertisement from the same poetry magazine, which actually adds hitherto unknown information to the Lovecraft legend. The magazine was a gift to me by J. C. Henneberger, original publisher of Weird Tales magazine, who was a close acquaintance of Lovecraft.

I could fill this entire magazine with details and implications of the "curiosa" reprinted. That must wait for another time, but for now, I think most readers will find them of more than passing interest.

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The First Literary Agency Specializing in Science Fiction

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MEMBERS

American Fiction
Guild

SOLAR SALES SERVICE

4727 Hudson Boulevard
North Bergen, N. J.

EXECUTIVES

Julius Schwartz
Mortimer Weisinger

Only recently Julius Schwartz (Editor, FANTASY MAGAZINE) and myself made an extensive survey of the entire science fiction field, through a series of talks with the various editors, and as a result we are firmly convinced that fantasy fiction is due for a renaissance.

Over at ASTOUNDING STORIES, Desmond Hall and Orlin Tremaine tell us that they particularly need 6000 word shorts with plenty of science in 'em. We are told that as soon as they reach a certain circulation, the magazine may go bi-weekly -- which means that their demand for stories will be correspondingly increased. Payment is now 1¢ a word on acceptance -- and they are raising the ante soon.

THRILLING ADVENTURE STORIES, Leo Margulies, the editorial director, tells us, wants an s-f story a month. Payment is $\frac{3}{4}$ ¢ a word and up, on acceptance.

AMAZING STORIES, Dr. Sloane tells us, is no longer overstocked, for they have returned obsolete manuscripts which have been cluttering up their files. They are in desperate need of good 20,000 word novelettes with new ideas and plenty of science. Decisions on all yarns are made within 3 weeks. Payment -- $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ a word on pub.

WONDER STORIES pays promptly on publication now. Charles Hornig, managing editor, can use stories of all lengths, especially short shorts with trick endings.

C. H. Whipple and Rogers Terrill of TERROR TALES tell us that they want good "thrill and chill" stuff for their mag, with a sex angle. Good rates.

ARGOSY'S new editor, Frederick Clayton, wants new blood in the magazine. This means that newcomers have the same chances as "big names". Excellent rates.

There are a number of other magazines using s-f regularly. BLUE BOOK, DIME MYSTERY, SECRET AGENT-X, TEN DETECTIVE ACES and others regularly feature science fiction, and they will continue to do so, the editors tell us. Moreover, we have definite exclusive information regarding a new weird-scientific magazine shortly to be put on the market by a nationally known publishing house. This magazine, paying good rates on acceptance, has asked us to contact new writers for them. Never in the history of science fiction has there been such a wide open market.

In view of this favorable situation, I am pleased to announce the formation of SOLAR SALES SERVICE, an agency for all science fiction and fantasy writers, of which Schwartz and myself are the sole executives.

Briefly, we will market stories submitted to our agency to each of the aforementioned magazines for our clients. If a story is salable, we notify author by airmail, and send our check. Should a story be deemed unavailable, we return it with at least three personal comments of editors who read the yarn, telling why it was unavailable. If the story needs revision for a sale, we tell you how to do it. Moreover, we send out detailed market tips to clients every ten days, keeping them in direct touch with the actual needs of the various publications using science fiction. Most of this information is exceedingly informative and helpful. It saves the author excess time and postage on stories that can never be sold. For example, the editor of THRILLING ADVENTURE STORIES prefers all s-f stories sent him TOLD IN THE FIRST PERSON, which is a handy thing to know. Also, ASTOUNDING STORIES refuses to consider unsolicited serials for the next year. AMAZING STORIES has never yet turned down a decently written story on chemistry. George Bruce is soon coming out with a new air mag, and wants stories of future aviation. There are many other invaluable tips our service will familiarize you with.

As for our terms, they are extremely reasonable. We ask only that all stories sent us be accompanied with a dollar sales service fee. This fee is waived just as soon as we sell three stories for a client. Of course, we ask the usual ten per cent commission on all American sales, 15% on English sales. Keep in mind that as soon as we make 3 sales for a client, we will market all stories sent us to each of the markets listed in this letter, free of charge, providing, of course, the writer sends us his entire science-fiction output. Our income is made on sales -- not on exorbitant reading fees. Don't forget the self-addressed, stamped envelope, if you want the story back -- should it be spurned everywhere.

We are recommended by all the editors in the field. To mention but a few, Desmond Hall of ASTOUNDING says: "Schwartz & Weisinger are the best qualified agents for science-fiction in the country. Their agency has my heartiest support."

Charles Hornig, of WONDER STORIES, says: "I have bought flocks of stories through SOLAR SALES SERVICE. They have a profound knowl-

edge of the subject, and the sincerity required for success."

Dr. Sloane of AMAZING says: "I have known both Schwartz and Weisinger for years. You can't go wrong with them. I cordially recommend their service."

Leo Margulies, of THRILLING ADVENTURES, says: "I have long looked for an agency like SSS. I used to be an agent myself, and I know that they can deliver the goods."

We handle work for such nationally established science fiction writers as Ralph Milne Farley, John Russell Fearn, Francis Flagg, Dr. David H. Keller, Henry J. Kostkos, Lester Dent, Donald Wandrei, P. Schuyler Miller, L. A. Eshbach, L. Howard Morrow, Lilith Lorraine, J. Harvey Haggard, D. D. Sharp, Edmond Hamilton, Raymond A. Palmer, Raymond Z. Gallun, Eando Binder, Henry Hasse, Jack Williamson, Neil R. Jones, JOHN TAINÉ, and others.

We invite inquiries to Arthur J. Burks, A. Merritt, Paul Ernst, Harry Stephen Keeler, Norvell Page, Aron Mathieu (Editor, WRITER'S DIGEST), Willard Hawkins (Editor, AUTHOR & JOURNALIST). They can all vouch for our reliability.

Our agency is based on years of close contact with all the editors in the field. We know exactly what their needs are, and get them what they want.

ASTOUNDING STORIES has just asked us to get them a 60,000 word novel by John Taine....Dr. David H. Keller says: "I have never used an agent before. But I believe I can get results through your agency." Since we took on Dr. Keller, we have sold about three dozen of his shorts and novelettes to WONDER and AMAZING. We have just arranged to have an anthology of his best weird shorts published in book form in England....Henry J. Kostkos, who has appeared in all of the leading s-f mags, says: "I never expected to sell 'Sleep Scourge.' Thanks for opening a new market for me." Jack Williamson, author of serials in WEIRD TALES, WONDER, AMAZING, AND ASTOUNDING, says: "I can think of no one better qualified to handle science fiction."....Eando Binder writes: "Thank you very much for informing me of your agency. We most certainly are taking advantage of your service -- my brother and I." NOTE: We have just placed a 17,000 word novelette, "The Chess-board of Mars," by the Binder brothers to AMAZING. Have you seen Donald Wandrei's book-length "Frost" in CLUES? Watch for the sequel, "Dawn," and ask him about SOLAR SALES SERVICE. Harl Vincent, contributor to ARGOSY, AMAZING, WONDER and other mags, says: "Certainly with the contacts and knowledge possessed by you both, you should have no trouble in doing a lot of good for the out-of-town writer of science fiction." Murray Leinster says: "Your service is swell. You'll be hearing from me." (Addresses of all these writers on request)

We would be glad to include you too among our patrons. If there is anything you want cleared up before sending us stories, we will be glad to go into detail about it with you. All communications should be sent to: Mortimer Weisinger, SOLAR SALES SERVICE, 4727 Hudson Boulevard, North Bergen, N. J.

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One of the Earliest Releases Sent Out by a Fan Group

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REPORT OF THE FIRST NATIONAL SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION

Over 100 people attended the First National Science Fiction Convention held in Newark, N.J. on May 29th at Slovak Sokol Hall on Morris Avenue near Springfield Avenue. Delegates from twenty different cities in five states participated in the largest gathering of scientific-fictionists and science-hobbyists so far held in this country. Speeches by editors of the professional stf magazines were eagerly heard by the enthusiastic audience. Motion Pictures of popular scientific interest were presented by the Scientifilmakers of New York, a society of amateur movie-makers. Introductions, eulogies and informal discussion concluded the program for the day.

The address of welcome was given by Sam Moskowitz, editor of "Helios" one of the better known of the amateur science fiction fan magazines. Mr. Moskowitz spoke on the relationship of the editor, author and reader of stf. The welcoming address was followed by a talk by William S. Sykora, chairman of the Second Eastern Science Fiction Convention and provisional chairman of the Scientifilmakers, who explained the purpose of the Convention and showed how the present gathering proved the feasibility of holding a World Science Fiction Convention in conjunction with the 1939 New York World's Fair. Milton A. Rothman, chairman of the First and Third Eastern Science Fiction Conventions and president of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society, then outlined the various phases of the proposed World Convention and concluded his talk with a comparison of the development of classical music with that of scientific fiction.

Official representatives of the professional stf magazines were then called upon to address the convention. John W. Campbell, Jr., editor of Astounding Science Fiction, addressed the convention on the subject of stfan magazines. In his speech, Mr. Campbell suggested that there was a definite demand for semi-professional magazines of this type featuring news items, author interviews, story criticisms, forecasts of coming stories and other material published with a view to interesting the public at large in the fascinating reading of scientificfiction. Mortimer Weisinger, managing editor of Thrilling Wonder Stories, addressed the gathering on the topic of quarterly science fiction publications and the companion magazine to Thrilling Wonder. Mr. Weisinger announced that the editorial staff of his magazine were intensely interested in the World Convention and stated that a full page in his magazine would be devoted to the publicizing of this project. Chairman Moskowitz then read a special delivery air mail letter from Raymond A. Palmer, man. ed. of Amazing Stories, whose editorial offices are in Chicago, stating that he was unable to attend on account of the short notice and wishing the convention every success in its effort to popularize science fiction. Later in the day, a telegram was received from the editor of Marvel Science Stories congratulating the convention committee for their excellent work in making this convention possible and there by doing more than any other single thing in making science fiction popular.

After the official magazine representatives had spoken, the motion pictures were shown. "The Lost World" from the story by Sir A. Conan Doyle, was presented as a full length feature picture. "Einstein's Theory of Relativity", a film graphically portraying the salient points of the famous theory, was received with much acclaim. A cartoon and a comedy alluding to scientific inventions predicted by authors of scientific fiction rounded out the motion picture program.

During the general discussion which followed, R. D. Swisher, PhD of Winchester, Mass., spoke briefly on the possibility of travelling into the past or future by moving along the fourth dimension of time, which Einstein says must exist. Dr. Swisher is writing a brochure on the consensus of opinion concerning the possibility of travelling in time and is making an analysis of this subject with a view of proving that time travel is a physical possibility. John D. Clark, PhD, of Philadelphia, spoke briefly when introduced to the gathering. L. Sprague DeCamp, a writer of popular scientific articles, described his hobby of identifying accents from the spoken word. Mr. DeCamp was able to identify the birthplace in the United States of several of the speakers from their accents alone. Manly Wade Wellman, Frank Belknap Long, Otis A. Kline, Otto Binder, Jack Binder, L. A. Eshbach, Milton Kaletsky and other well known authors of modern stf spoke briefly when called upon. Mr. Leo Margulies, editorial director of the entire Thrilling Group of newstand publications expressed regret at having arrived late and said that he was extremely pleased with the size and enthusiasm of the present gathering. Prominent stfans and science-hobbyists were also introduced and had their say concerning their repsective hobbies.

The Convention was concluded with a discussion concerning the reorganization of the International Scientific Association, a scientific society of science fiction fans and science-hobbyists, for the purpose of promoting the World Science Fiction Convention. The meeting was then concluded with a motion that the convention go on record in faver of holding the World Science Fiction Convention and that a Convention Committee be appointed for this purpose. A committee of five was appointed and work on the World Convention is now going on.

NOTE: To the editor of the Fan Mag who receives this report.

The above is a report of the First National Science Fiction Convention which has been sent to the leading newspapers in New York and Newark. Please do not publish this report exactly as it is written above, because it has been sent to every worthwhile science fiction fan magazine. The Convention Committee would appreciate it very much if you would have one of your staff writers rewrite it and add anything further he may have noted. We would appreciate it, too, if you would make mention of the convention in your editorial columns. This material is sent for immediate publication. With sincere expressions of thanks we remain,

Yours For Science Fiction,
The Convention Committee.

Any further information concerning the First National Science Fiction Convention may be obtained by addressing William S. Sykora,

31-51 41st Street, Long Island City, N.Y., U.S.A. who will be glad to answer any questions concerning either the First National or the World Conventions. Your suggestions will be very welcome.

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An Attempt to Form A "Union" of Science Fiction Writers

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27 June, 1953

The next meeting of the Fantasy Writers' Guild will be held at the Lotos Club, 5 East 66th Street, New York, on 9 July 1953, at 8:00 p.m.EDT.

The proposed agenda is as follows:

1. The Constitutional Committee recommends that, to bypass a long series of tedious preliminary meetings, formal organization of the group should take place as soon as possible. The CC recommends that the group declare itself in existence as an organization and vote upon the proposed name in the first order of business.
2. The CC recommends that a slate of officers to serve for the remainder of 1953, including chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, and treasurer, be elected at this meeting.
3. The CC recommends that the elected chairman at once appoint a Membership Committee consisting of six members, each of whom is to serve for three years, with the terms of all six overlapping so that two members will be retired and two new ones elected each year, and with the provision that no member may hold a position on the committee for a second consecutive term. The initial appointment of the committee members by the chairman is designed to save time during the organizational stages of the group; thereafter, posts on the membership committee should be by election only.
4. We enclose a combined questionnaire and application for membership, which we request that you fill out and bring with you (or mail to James Blish, Box 241, Milford, Pike County, Penna., if you cannot attend the meeting). Please note that the form lists the categories of memberships which the CC has proposed, and the qualifications for each. Check the category in which you believe you fit best; then list briefly your own qualifications for that category, and any others which you believe the Membership Committee should consider.
5. The dues schedule shown on the questionnaire, like everything else the CC has proposed thus far, is tentative and may be revised at the next meeting. For this reason, and because only six months remain of this year, the CC recommends that dues for 1953 be limited to a uniform \$7.50 for every member, regardless of the category of membership to which the Membership Committee may admit him later. Please bring the money with you and turn it over to the 1953 treasurer as soon as he or she is elected; or, if you cannot attend, mail it with your application. Sums already paid to the group will, of course, be credited against 1953 dues; be sure to claim such credits in the place provided on the questionnaire.

This agenda and the suggestions included in it have been proposed by the CC and are in no way binding; they are subject to ratification by the full membership. The alternative, however, seems to us to be a long

series of meetings that will cover the points mentioned above item by item. We ask that you give the agenda your best consideration prior to the meeting, so that we may at last get on to the items of new business which are of real interest to all of us.

FWG Constitutional Committee

Harry Harrison, Willy Ley, Frederik Pohl, Hans Stefan Santesson, George O. Smith, Theodore Sturgeon; James Blish ex officio

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP in the FANTASY WRITERS' GUILD

I. In the box below are listed the proposed categories of membership in the FWG, together with the dues suggested for each and the qualifications agreed upon for each by the Constitutional Committee. Please check the category for which you are applying in the appropriate square.

/ CATEGORIES OF MEMBERS: /

/ (A) Fellows. An honorary membership, dues-free and by invitation /
/ only, to be extended yearly to the foremost exponents of the field. /

/ (B) Members. Dues, \$16.00 per year. The following persons may be /
/ members: /

- / 1. Any writer in the field who has published 50,000 words over a /
/ period of three years; or, /
- / 2. who has published a book (at least 45,000 words long) within /
/ two years of application of membership; or, /
- / 3. who has published a flat minimum of 500,000 words in the /
/ field over any period of time preceding his application. (Mem- /
/ ber writers are required to publish 12,000 words per year to /
/ retain their Member status.) /
- / 4. Any artist who has produced two front covers or two book /
/ jackets in the field during the preceding year; or, /
- / 5. who has produced 10 inside illustrations during that year. /
- / 6. Any editor in the field who has been in editorial control of /
/ his magazine for the 12 consecutive issues preceding his appli- /
/ cation or has edited 12 books in the field over the three years /
/ preceding his application. /
- / 7. Any regular contributor to the field whose reputation is /
/ known to the Membership Committee, and who can satisfy that /
/ committee as to his professional status and continuing inter- /
/ est in the field. /

/ (C) Affiliates. Dues, \$10.00 per year. Any writer, editor or /
/ artist who has made a minimum of one professional contribution /
/ to the field in the year preceding his application, but whose /
/ current contributions do not meet the minimum requirements for /
/ full membership, may be an Affiliate. (Non-voting.) /

/ (D) Associates. Dues, \$20.00 per year. Agents, publishers, pro- /
/ ducers, and all other persons who are interested in the field and /
/ wish to support the FWG and its aims, but whose primary work lies /
/ in the business rather than in the creative area of the field, and /
/ who cannot otherwise qualify for the Member or Affiliate grades, /
/ may be Associates of the FWG. (Non-voting.) /

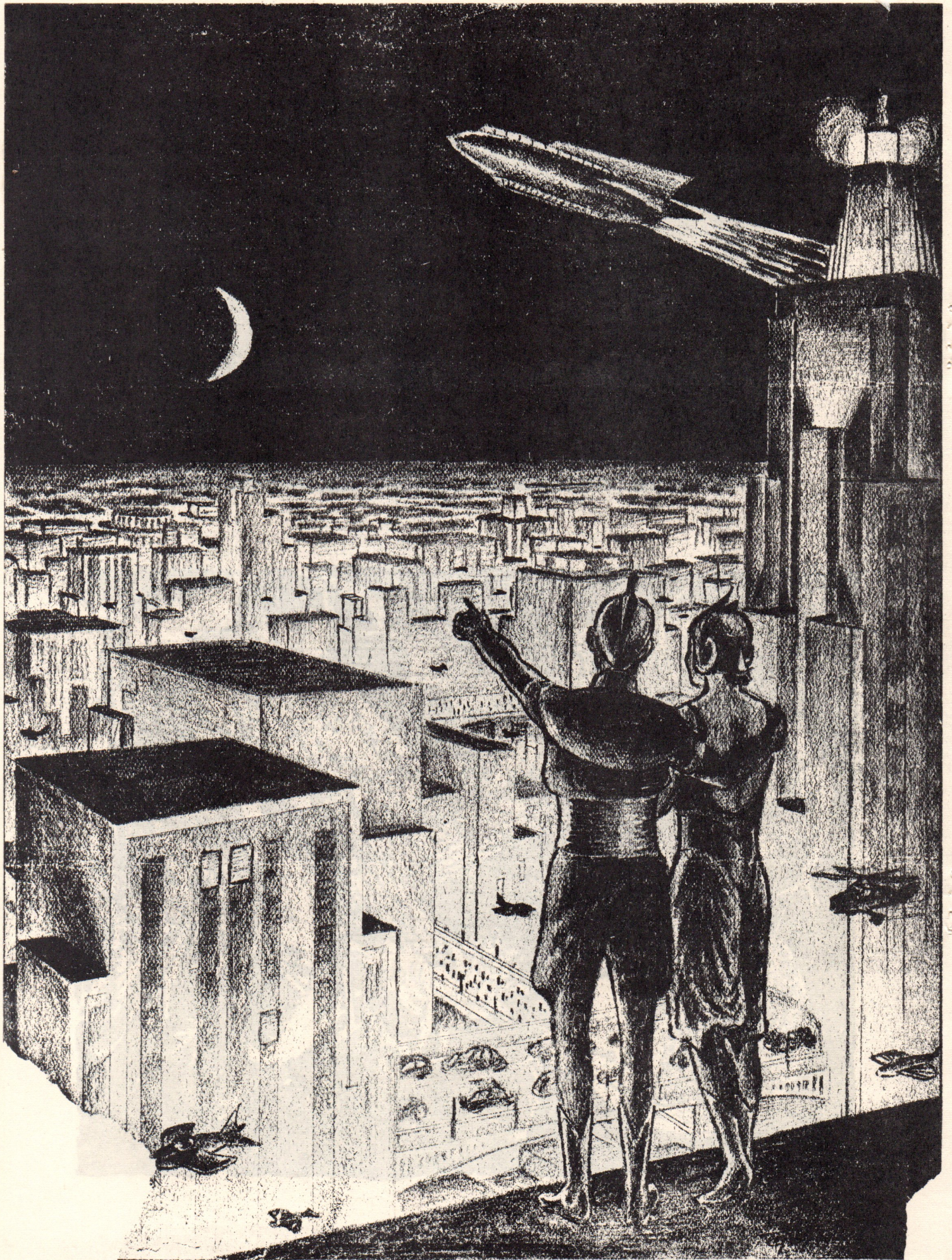


THE LORE OF H. P. LOVECRAFT

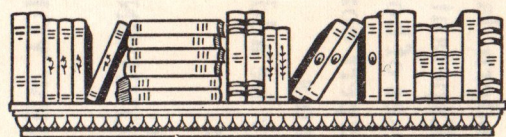
THE MAN AND THE LEGEND

by SAM MOSKOWITZ





"THE ROCKETS DESTINATION"



Review and Comment

EBONY AND CRYSTAL by CLARK ASHTON SMITH. (4to152pp. The Auburn Journal, Auburn, Calif., 1923.)

BETWEEN the urbane sterilities of our bearded Brahmins and the psycho-analytical clinics of our younger intellectuals, American poetry fares badly indeed; a condition expressed with melancholy force by George Sterling in his introduction to the third book of verse from Clark Ashton Smith. More truly sensitive to the wilder dreams of men, and more sublimely cosmic in his imaginative sweep of fancy's chartless chaos than any native versifier since Poe, Mr. Smith has remained in relative obscurity outside his Californian domain because of a public trained to distrust beauty and the adventure of the spirit.

"EBONY AND CRYSTAL" is an artist's intrepid repudiation of the world of trolleys and cash-registers, Freudian complexes and Binet-Simon tests, for realms of exalted and iridescent strangeness beyond space and time yet real as any reality because dreams have made them so. Mr. Smith has escaped the fetish of life and the world, and glimpsed the perverse, titanic beauty of death and the universe; taking infinity as his canvas and recording in awe the vagaries of suns and planets, gods and dæmons, and blind amorphous horrors that haunt gardens of polychrome fugi more

remote than Algol and Achernar. It is a cosmos of vivid flame and glacial abysses that he celebrates, and the colorful luxuriance with which he peoples it could be born from nothing less than sheer genius.

The summation of Mr. Smith's exotic vision is perhaps attained in the long phantasmal procession of blank verse pentameters entitled, "The Hashish-Eater; or, The Apocalypse of Evil." In this frenzied plunge through nameless gulfs of interstellar terror the Californian presents a narcotic pageant of poisonous vermilion and paralysing shadows whose content is equalled only by its verbal medium; a medium involving one of the most opulent and fastidiously choice vocabularies ever commanded by a writer of English.

Mr. Smith, born in 1893, was the author of an amazing volume at nineteen. He has kept faithful to the splendour that knows no shackles, and whether in his cosmic orgies or his simpler love-poems has always fulfilled the Cabellian aspiration—"to write perfectly of beautiful happenings."

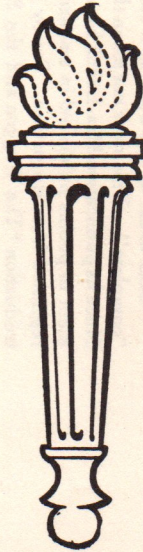
H. P. L.



THE WAGGON AND THE STAR, by MARY SINTON LEITCH. B. J. Brimmer Company, publishers, Boston, Mass.

SLENDER as this book is, it conveys an impression of being "complete". This does not mean that it is all of the author's work. Since its publication Mrs. Leitch has continued to evidence development in poems published in magazines. These, too, were largely reprinted from magazines. But by judicious arrangement and introduction "The Waggon and the Star" bears form. It is not a "collection", it is something far more satisfying than a "collection".

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APPLICATIONS and INQUIRIES may be addressed to either of the heads of THE BUREAU :

HOWARD P. LOVECRAFT,
598 ANGELL STREET, PROVIDENCE, R. I.

JAMES F. MORTON, JR.,
211 WEST 138TH STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y.