

THE FANTASY FAN

THE FANS' OWN MAGAZINE

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OUR READERS SAY

"The November issue beats the first two by a mile! If this keeps up, I wonder what the tenth issue will be like? Sorry that I cannot send an English science-fiction column this month, as I haven't heard from the other side yet. Have written to South Africa on the stf situation there, but won't promise you anything on it. Will we have a story in the December issue? 'The Other Gods' beat 'The Kingdom of the Worm.' "

--Bob Tucker.

We cannot tell what the tenth issue of TFF will be like, but you can get a good idea of what the fifth will be like by reading our editorial. We are sorry we did not receive your foreign science-fiction column this month, and would be pleased to hear about South Africa. You will notice three stories in this issue of TFF. Which of the stories so far published is the best, is a matter of opinion. Further on in this department you will learn the varied opinions of their merit.

"What might be called the 'Anti-Ackerman' issue has just arrived. It looks to me like you ought to have advertised it as that, or run a streamer across the top. I think it would have doubled your subscriptions, so many people, it seems, would like to read something against me.

Will you please tone down the remarks about my being the 'most active fan,' etc? That started with you. You can't say I ever had anything to do with it. Many people reading such statements will become antagonistic 'just because,' and though I'm going around begging people to like me, still there's no virtue in unnecessarily tipping away from you neutral parties."--Forrest J. Ackerman.

The editor wishes to drop formalities for a brief paragraph in order to make a personal confession, and will therefore speak in the singular. Yes, Forrie, it has all been my fault. I was the one that called you "the world's most active fan," etc., and really had something to do with the animosity some of my readers have had toward you. Let me say that I want to apologize--I am very sorry for it. I meant well, but it didn't seem to have been interpreted the way it was intended. All those lauditory remarks were really said to let other readers know how much you have done to advance science fiction, but for certain peculiar reasons which can never be foretold, they weren't taken in the proper light. Frankly, this should teach us both a lesson--you and I. I should consider carefully every remark I make about anyone or his work, and you should become less prejudiced and vehement on any particu-

lar subject, and consider the question: "What's one man's opinion?" Your controversy with C. A. Smith is continued in this issue's "Boiling Point."

"I am highly pleased with your publication, and hope you can make a success of it. Glad to see you are printing Lovecraft's excellent article on 'Supernatural Horror in Literature,' and also his 'Other Gods.' Smith's tale was most entertaining."--R.H. Barlow(author of the 'Annals' series)

"TFF continues to improve, the November issue marknig a new high, what with Lovecraft and Smith in the same number."

--Allen Glasser

"I find the *Fantasy Fan* very interesting and think it has a good future. Anybody ought to be willing to pay a dollar for the privilege of reading, for a whole year, the works of Lovecraft, Smith, and Derleth. I am glad to see that you announce a poem by Smith in the next issue. He is a poet second to none. Weird poetry possesses an appeal peculiar to itself and the careful use of it raises the quality of any magazine. I liked very much the department of 'True Ghost Stories,' and hope you will continue it. The world is full of unexplained incidents and peculiar circumstances, the logical reasons for which are often so obscure and hidden that they are lent an illusion of the supernatural."

--Robert E. Howard

We wish there were more authors and fans that were enthusiastic over the future of weird fiction and *The Fantasy Fan* as you and our other readers are, and were willing to support it. Yes, anyone should be willing to pay a dollar to read the works of the authors you mention for a whole year--and you are

certainly included in that list, although you, of course, would not mention that fact. The opinions of such a popular weird author as yourself carry weight, and it is a supreme pleasure to have you as a subscriber and contributor. Our gratitude is unbounded.

"Delighted to see the November issue. All the items and departments seem well calculated to interest the weird fiction devotee; and since there is no other magazine in this field, TFF ought certainly to be able to build up a solid clientele in the course of time."

H. P. Lovecraft

"Weisinger has done himself proud in both TFF and SFD. If he can only keep going! I wonder what would happen if Schwartz fell down?!! Lovecraft is O. K., and so is the whole issue; it is interesting. All I'm doing is praising your mag, but what else can I do?"

--Kenneth Pritchard

Without Schwarz and Weisinger, science fiction fan material would receive a terrific blow from which it would never recover. We are glad to see that you are boosting our magazine; thanks for your enthusiasm.

"One is inclined to believe that H. P. Lovecraft's 'The Other Gods' should now have cause to look down upon 'The Kingdom of the Worm,' as created by Clark Ashton Smith. The latter's tale, at best, was an inferior Smith writing, and truly, not one of his best. One must be logical and open-minded, you know. R. H. Barlow is deserving of praise for his 'Annals.' The gentlemen with the musical pen-name of Hoy Ping Pong produced an enjoyable article on 'How to Write a STF Story:' very amusing satire." Robert Nelson.

"I surely am delighted with the second issue of TFF--a big step forward from the first edition! By all means keep up the good work that you have started. This is just the thing we non-scientificionists need. Lovecraft, Smith, Wandrei, Howard, and Quinn, I hope, will be your main contributors as they just about hold up the weird and fantastic candle. I look for big things from you! 'The Kingdom of the Worm' was quite light and weak and far below the Smith standard--he is my favorite author and I know what he can do as I have nearly all of his stories and poems. The idea of portrayal was novel but many more pages could have been written. It seemed to me that the climax came to quickly, and with a less startling denouement than is customary with Mr. Smith's work. However, I was gladly surprised to see the story in this new magazine's pages. 'Supernatural Horror in Literature' by H. P. Lovecraft is intensely interesting."--F. Lee Baldwin.

One has his full right to like or dislike a story, and while you and the previous writer believed Smith's tale to be below his standard, many have written in acclaiming it one of his best. If the tale had appeared in *Weird Tales*, you might have thought so also, but seeing that TFF is only a struggling little publication, you might have "hypnotised" yourself into believing that it was not up to his average. And then again, you must be in the mood when you read weird stories. Reading them under unfavorable conditions may force a derogatory opinion of the tale upon you.

"The second TFF was good! Hope you will get more staff writers who are familiar with fantastic fiction as you go

along. Glad to see Lovecraft's article. C. A. Smith's tale was fine. Keep up their publication in spite of the opposition which will be forthcoming of 'pure' stf addicts."--Lester Anderson.

"The second issue was read with much interest and enjoyment. It showed considerable improvement over the first issue. The high spots were Clark Ashton Smith's story 'The Kingdom of the Worm' and the beginning of H. P. Lovecraft's article on 'Supernatural Horror in Literature.' Smith's story was splendid and I hope to see much more of his work in TFF. Lovecraft's article began very promisingly, my only criticism being that the instalment was much too short."--H. Koenig.

"I am glad to learn that TFF will be devoted henceforth to the weird in fiction, for I feel that truly fantastic literature, as distinguished from the merely pseudo-scientific, is entitled to the fullest support; a support hitherto given to the stf type. I feel certain that a large and appreciative following may be built up among the disciples of this branch of literature. My best wishes to the success of TFF."--Richard P. Searight.

Following are two letters in direct contrast.

"I have read the October issue of TFF from cover to cover and enjoyed it thoroughly. I have one objection, though. Since TFF is a magazine devoted to the discussion of weird fiction, you should cut down on the stf stuff. You'll find plenty of readers who will enjoy it without having to add so much science fiction talk."--Emil Petaja.

"Please keep on using the same kind of paper and add more pages. Was sorry to hear that TFF is leaning toward

MY SCIENCE FICTION COLLECTION

by Forrest J. Ackerman

Part Four

In my collection are the manuscripts of such stories as "West of the Earth" (renamed "In Martian Depths") by Juve, Miss Long's "The Last Man" ("Omega") "The Egg from the Lost Planet" ("Girl from Mars," by Breuer-Williamson), Skidmore's "Romance of Posi and Nega" "Lancer in the Crystal" .. "The Cities of Ardathia" .. "In the Land of the Bipo" .. "The Machine Man of Ardathia" "By the Hands of the Dead" .. "Seed of the Toc-Toc Birds" .. "The Head of Apex," and others all by Francis Flagg. "The Golden Bough," by Dr. Keller, Ed Earl Repp's "Metal World", Bob Olsen's "My Martian Sweetheart", pages from different Edmond Hamilton stories, and others, plus the entire serial by C. Willard Diffin, "Two Thousand Miles Below." I have, in addition, a translation into French of David H. Keller's "Stenographer's Hands," which originally appeared in *Amazing Stories Quarterly*. The French version is known as "Les mains et la machine."

Also, there are four letter files and a large cabinet--all chock full of correspondence from authors and fans.

There is one portion of my collection yet to be described: the scientifilms. In a large box are advertisements, press-sheets, reviews, write-ups, publicity copy, photos, "cuts," and all similar material from dozens of movie magazines, newspapers, other periodicals, film companies and all parts of the world on the scientific from long years ago up to even those to be produced in the future. The

weird fiction. Why do you encourage superstition with all the pronouncements of science against it? I like the magazine fine, all except the weird part. I never have read a good weird tale. Why do they print the science fiction and interplanetary stories of Kline, Hamilton, and Williamson in *Weird Tales*, for weird tales, interplanetary stories are not weird."--Lloyd Fowler.

Now, considering the two above letters, what is the poor editor to do? For the present, we will continue to use both sf and weird material, leaning toward the weird and printing only weird stories--except, of course, in the January issue, which will be chiefly weird. By the way, we believe that the January number will have quite opposite effects upon Messrs. Petaja and Fowler. We are sorry to hear that Mr. Fowler has never read a good weird story. We must pity him. Has he ever tried a magazine known as *Weird Tales* by any chance? But all kidding aside, we will take his suggestions into consideration.

For some reason known only to themselves, *Weird Tales* has refused to accept the TFF ad for their January, 1934 issue. Perhaps they think they have competition! We had intended to make our January number entirely weird with 24 pages, but now find it inadvisable, because of the rejection of our ad. We find that it would be best to conserve the Fantasy Fan Fund for future issues, rather than put everything into one issue.

amount of material covered in this file is impossible to describe.

(In the installments Mr. Ackerman tells about his scientifilm "stills")

Birkett's Twelfth Corpse

by August W. Derleth

The wall of hate that stood between the two old rivermen, Fred Birkett and Hank Blum, had grown from a strange and gruesome rivalry -- the finding of dead bodies of persons drowned in the Wisconsin River at Sac Prairie. At the time of the tragic drowning of Bud Enders, the rivermen were tied--each had found eleven bodies in the past forty years. It was said by each of them, and repeated in Sac Prairie, that Bud Enders' body would decide the contest.

The sympathy of Sac Prairie was with Birkett, a kindly old man in contrast to the sullen surliness of Blum, who was, too, somewhat younger. Birkett had always joked about his odd luck at finding bodies in the river, and still looked upon his almost uncanny way of knowing where the bodies had been taken by the swift current as more amusing than not. But Blum had brooded upon his rival's luck ever since Birkett had earned a five-hundred dollar reward for finding the corpse of a young student who had fallen into the Wisconsin while drunk, almost a decade before. Now Blum made no effort to conceal his violent hatred for Birkett, nor could Birkett keep down his dislike for his rival.

Bud Enders was drowned on a warm night in July, and twenty boats put out from Sac Prairie within an hour after he went down. Fred Birkett and Hank Blum were among them. Both the old men headed downstream, knowing by long past experience that the swift current in mid-channel, where the youth was drawn under, would quickly roll the body below

Sac Prairie toward the long clay river bank southeast of the village, locally known as the Yellowbanks district.

Toward dawn, Fred Birkett found Bud Enders' body, rolling along in shallow but swift water crossing a sandbar just above the Yellowbanks. The moon was out, and he had no difficulty seeing the body, which he immediately seized with a boathook and secured to the boat without taking it from the water. Then he edged his boat out of the current and made swiftly upstream.

Just where Hiney's Slough enters the Wisconsin, he met Blum. He could not help boasting. "Just made my dozen," he called to Hank in a gruff, yet faintly triumphant voice.

Blum turned his boat and swung across current toward him.

Birkett rested on his oars. Unaware of the fury that consumed his rival, he went on, "Well, we couldn't both find him. Let the best man win, I always said," and smiled in the satisfaction of feeling himself the better of the two.

Blum had said nothing, but now he was looking cautiously upstream and down, his eyes scanning the surface of the water for sight of any boat, his ears waiting to catch any sound that might indicate the approach of other searchers. The two boats lay in quiet water, away from the current.

Whether or not Birkett heard Blum loosen and jerk out one oar is problematical. He turned toward Blum just as the oar descended and caught him a glancing blow on the side of the head, top-

pling him from his boat and turning the boat with him. Then, with a savage lunge, he pushed Birkett's boat out of reach of the older man just as he came coughing and gasping to the surface of the water. With another quick movement, Blum detached Ender's body from the overturned boat. He made no attempt to catch the body, knowing that the current would not carry it from this quiet water, and he could always return and find it.

Then he shot away, unmindful of Birkett's despairing cries, and secure in the knowledge that Birkett could not swim very well. A little way upstream he paused and listened. There was no sound from below; Birkett had gone down. A cunning smile crossed his lips. Edging the boat into shallow water, he let himself fall fully clothed into the river, wetting himself thoroughly, except for his torn hat, which he threw into the bottom of the boat to give it the appearance of having been hastily torn away from his head and thrown there. Then he got back into the boat and rowed furiously toward Sac Prairie.

The circle of boats was now further downstream, and he did not have to row up quite as far as he drifted down. He timed his entrance well, for the boy's cap had just been found along shore, and the searchers were excited over their find. Quite suddenly he shot from under the bridge into the yellow glow of lanterns held high above the water.

"Birkett's gone under," he shouted frantically. "His boat tipped just above the Yellowbanks!"

Anyone who doubted his cries was easily convinced by his bedraggled appearance, and it did not require his ex-

planation that he had gone into the water after Birkett to explain the wetness of his clothes. He told hastily that the old man fought hard, that he had had to hit him finally, and had at last reluctantly to let him go in order to save himself.

As he led the rowboats to a spot a hundred yards above the entrance to Hiney's Slough, where in the quiet water the two bodies still lay. Blum was enjoying the irony of the knowledge that his twelfth body would be that of his old rival. He broke into speech again, excitedly telling about the accident, and explaining that the boat had long since gone downstream, swept away by the powerful current in which it had tipped. He pointed out approximately the place where the accident had occurred, and went glibly over his story a third time. Then he left the searchers, and pulled into the current toward the dark waters where Birkett had actually gone down.

That much Sac Prairie was later able to piece together. What happened after that is more obscure and fraught with horrific suggestion. It is certain that he went downstream, and equally certain that he seemed to be heading for Hiney's Slough, though one or two disputed this point later. Despite the moon, it was difficult to observe Blum's progress downstream, for he was soon lost in the very heavy shadows on the quiet water surrounding the slough's junction with the river.

In the babble of sound made by the searchers above the slough Blum might have called for some time and not have been heard, though this is doubtful. At any rate, during a lull in the conversation, someone picked up the sound of frantic calling. Everyone stood and list-

ened. Once again came a sharp call, in a voice which was immediately identified as Hank Blum's. The call was heavy with horror and fear. Then another call began to sound, but was abruptly stopped, almost as if it had been rudely shut off by a hand clapped over the lips thru which it came.

The boats immediately pulled away toward Hiney's Slough.

At first there was nothing to be seen except the bottoms of two overturned boats, one of which was Blum's, the other Birkett's. Then someone saw the body of Eaders over against one bank, apparently just washing up from deep water. Quite near it, partly submerged, they found the bodies of Hank Blum and Fred Birkett.

Blum was dead, but he had not been drowned. He had been strangled. For when the horrified searchers pulled him out of the water, they found Fred Birkett's dead fingers sunk deep in the flesh of Blum's neck.

Birkett had found his twelfth corpse.

CLUB NEWS

Mr. Glasser informs us that he will have more news about the Fantasy Fans' Fraternity for our February issue. If you are a science fiction fan, why don't you become a member? There is no charge. Simply write to

Allen Glasser

1610 University Avenue

Bronx, New York

and he will tell you all about it.

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Subscribe to TFF today to insure yourself of a monthly copy. Only a limited number are printed.

CONGLAMITORIAL

Third in the series...Most peculiar titles: "Appendix and the Spectacles," "The Captured Cross-Section," and "The Gostak and the Doshes;" all by Breuer...Extremities: "Absolute Zero" and "The Heat Wave"... There is plenty of adventure in fantasy fiction. There's the Adventure in Time -- In Futurity-- On Eros -- Of the Pipe -- In Anesthesia--and the Atomic... "When will we have atomic power? Will we have to wait until "After 5,000 Years," "After 12,000 Years," "After 1,000,000 Years," or until "After Armageddon"?...The entire story of "Beyond the Star Curtain" by Garth Bentley took place upon the earth...Wanted: information from our Long Island readers leading to the discovery of the "Vanishing Wood" in which Tom Jenkins disappeared in October, 1931 (Chronicle in "In 20,000 A. D." by Schachner and Zagat in the September, 1930 Wonder)...People may laugh at fantasy fiction --but we know of at least *two* motion picture stars that owe their world-wide success to it, and you can think of many others...Of all the interplanetary stories ever written, "Interplanetary Bridges," by Ludwig Anton, is the only one to have the word in its title...

Science and Knowledge,
And strong youth and power--
Science, the creed of a nation!
New customs for old,
New ways, a new mold--
The tale of the New Generation!

-- Virginia Kidd

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Tell your friends about TFF

INFORMATION

We have received several requests (and we mean *several*) for a list of the stories written by Edgar Rice Burroughs. Following we present a list of his works compiled from the list in the January, 1933 issue of the *Science Fiction Digest*, through the courtesy of Julius Schwartz.

A Princess of Mars
 The Gods of Mars
 The Warlord of Mars
 Thuvia, Maid of Mars
 The Chessmen of Mars
 The Mastermind of Mars
 A Fighting Man of Mars
 At the Earth's Core
 Pellucidar
 Tanar of Pellucidar
 Tarzan of the Apes
 The Return of Tarzan
 The Beasts of Tarzan
 The Son of Tarzan
 Tarzan and the Jewels of Opar
 Tarzan the Untamed
 Tarzan the Terrible
 Tarzan and the Golden Lion
 Tarzan and the Ant Men
 Tarzan, Lord of the Jungle
 Tarzan and the Lost Empire
 Tarzan at the Earth's Core
 Tarzan the Invincible
 Tarzan Triumphant
 The Cave Girl
 The Eternal Lover
 The Land that Time Forgot
 The Monster Men
 The Moon Maid
 Jungle Girl

This is not a complete list of his works. Will all those that know of stories he has written that are not in this list please send in the names so that

HOW TO COLLECT
FANTASY FICTION

by Julius Schwartz

Part Four

Some of the former Munsey magazines published a great deal of fantastic fiction that went under the name of 'different' stories. In fact, no fantasy collection could ever be considered 'fair' without a goodly number of these 'classics,' as they have been so often termed. The magazines were: *Argosy*, *All-Story*, *Argosy All-Story*, *Cavalier*, *Cavalier All-Story*, *Scrap Book*, and *Munsey's Magazine*. Dates 1890 and up!

If the collector is ambitious enough he may try to procure some of the English magazines that include fantasies within their covers. Some of them are: *Pearson's Magazine* (the monthly, not weekly) *The Startler*, *Union Jack*, *Magnet*, and *Grit*. The first, by the way, originally printed most of H.G. Wells' early fantasy yarns, and it'd be a feather in any collector's hat if he were, by any chance, able to get his hands on one of those rare issues.

(We are sorry to state that Part Five will be the conclusion. In this last part, coming in our February issue, we will have Mr. Schwartz tell about fantasy booklets, and he will also inform us about the hard covers.)

we can publish them? We would appreciate it.

If you have any question about weird or science fiction that you would like answered, send it in to us, and we will do our best to answer it for you in this department.

The Flagon of Beauty

(Annals of the Jinns)

by R. H. Barlow

The Princess drooped her long eyelashes. She was really quite pretty when she did this.

"And you have brought it?" she asked softly, her hand stealing into his. He coughed. This being spokesman was a delicate task.

"Yes, your Highness," said the man. "It is here." He touched a small parcel beside him on the divan.

"And you will give it to me?" she breathed.

Steeling himself, he replied, "Their terms are the freedom of the people."

She sprang to her feet. "Never!"

"Not for the Flagon?" he queried harshly.

"Not even for that." Reconsidering, she spoke slowly. "Five years ago I sent a band in search of this fabulous drug, into the low-lying jungle that cloaks the Ancient Cities, the Cities that no man knows who built, there in the steaming swamps. Men have said that I was beautiful, yet, ironically, he for whom I have wrecked my empire scorned me. It was then I bethought me of this flask made in the immemorial years ago, which figured in legend as containing the essence of Beauty. Perhaps, I thought, with this I might win him from my rival. Today you have returned; successfully, I grant you; and demand yield of my power for that which I desire. I have been told bitter things--that I have ruled mercilessly and tyrannically. That I have,

but I cared little for affairs of state since I became enamoured of my prince. He has neglected no indignity to impose upon me, but I cannot forget him. On the night of my Feast of Peacocks he sneered at the priceless dishes and fed his monkey from the plate. The gutter-rat he has an infatuation for entertains him most skillfully, but he shares her with the soldiers. He prefers her florid charms to me. This I do not understand, but I command you, *give me that flagon.*"

He slowly shook his head. "No, Majesty, I cannot betray their faith. Fever took many lives in those crumbling ruins."

"I warn you, I am desperate," she said imperiously, "give, or I shall take."

He lowered his gaze and remained silent. Seeing he was adamant, she made a gesture with her head, and a slave stepped from the curtained alcove. "Take this man to the Room of Pain," she ordered. In consternation, he sought to dash the frail vessel to the tiles, but it was dexterously twisted from his grasp by the blackamoor.

The princess laughed insanely.

"My men did well to steal you from under his nose, my wench," she sneered to the helpless woman at her feet. "Let me see those carmine lips smile at this!" she added contemptuously, breaking the ancient seal covered with writing

SUPERNATURAL HORROR IN LITERATURE

by H. P. Lovecraft

(Copyright 1927 by W. Paul Cook)

Part Three

This type of fear-literature must not be confounded with a type externally similar but psychologically widely different; the literature of mere physical fear and the mundanely gruesome. Such writing, to be sure, has its place, as has the conventional or even whimsical or humorous ghost story where formalism or the author's knowing wink removes the true sense of the morbidly unnatural; but these things are not the literature of cosmic fear in its purest sense. The true weird tale has something more than secret murder, bloody bones, or a sheeted form clanking chains according to rule. A certain atmosphere of breathless and unexplainable dread of outer, unknown forces must be present; and there must be a hint, expressed with a seriousness and portentousness becoming its subject, of that most terrible conception of the human brain--a malign and particular suspension or defeat of those fixed laws of Nature which are our only safeguard against the assaults of chaos and daemons of unplumbed space.

Naturally we cannot expect all weird tales to conform absolutely to any theoretical model. Creative minds are uneven, and the best fabrics have their dull spots. Moreover, much of the choicest weird work is unconscious; appearing in memorable fragments scattered through material whose massed effect may be of a very different cast. Atmosphere is the all-important thing, for the final criterion of authenticity is not the dovetailing of a plot but the creation of a given sensation.

We may say, as a general thing, that a weird story whose intent is to teach or produce a social effect, or one in which the horrors are finally explained away by natural means, is not a genuine tale of cosmic fear; but it remains a fact that such narratives often possess, in isolated sections, atmospheric touches which fulfil every condition of the true supernatural horror-literature. Therefore we must judge a weird tale not by the author's intent, or by the mere mechanics of the plot; but by the emotional level which it attains at its least mundane point. If the proper sensations are excited, such a "high spot" must be admitted on its own merits as weird literature, no matter how prosaically it is later dragged down. The one test of the really weird is simply this--whether or not there be excited in the reader a profound sense of dread, and of contact with unknown spheres and powers; a subtle attitude of awed listening, as if for the beating of black wings or the scratching of outside shapes and entities on the known universe's utmost
(continued on page 61)

The Flagon of Beauty (cont from p 57)
none could interpret. "You are startled? Yes, it is the Flagon! Watch, if you wish, for you may not see when I am finished with you." She drained the very dregs, and flung the stopper in her captive's face. For a long moment there was no change apparent in her flushed countenance. Then she noticeably paled. Her hair swiftly grew leaded and grey, her lips assumed a ghastly pallor, and a score of tiny wrinkles appeared on her smooth skin.

She became an old hag, quite out of place in the splendour of the throne-room.

Spurs of Death

by Natalie H. Wooley

The warden leaned back in his chair as he watched the door close, then turned to the man who stood looking out of the window.

"Well, Jim?" he queried. The other came slowly back to the desk and re-seated himself. His face was puzzled.

"Who was that, Tom? He seems strangely familiar, and yet I can't seem to place him."

"That man was Cliff Williams, the cowboy murderer," said the warden. "You may have seen his picture in the papers. He gets the chair next month for the three murders he has committed."

Jim Kelton registered surprise.

"He doesn't look like the sort of person to do such a thing like that. He seems almost a kid."

The warden smiled grimly. "His looks are deceiving. He has killed three men in the last ten years, and as far as anyone knows, without any reason. I'll tell you the story, if you care to hear it."

The other assented.

"Well, the first one was a cow hand down in Texas about ten years ago. He was working on a ranch down there and he and this fellow got in an argument over something. He shot him. Then he raked his face open with his spurs. That was the thing that trapped him in the end. Every time he killed, he marked his victim's face. Horrible, I grant you. Well, he disappeared, and finally the case was forgotten. He was a kid of nineteen or twenty then. Five

years later he turned up in Oregon. Worked on the Lazy T ranch there. All the men liked him, too. He was quiet, knew his business, and never talked much. Then one day, he came in from line camp and the foreman gave him his pay. There seemed to be some mistake in it, and he went to the ranch house to see Danby, the owner. None of the boys noticed him come out, but when the cook went to call him to dinner, he found Danby dead. Choked to death, his face ripped open, and the cowboy gone. When they went to look for Williams, he was gone. When they next heard of him, the police got a call to investigate a brawl in a Laredo saloon. When they arrived and broke through the circle, they saw two men struggling. Suddenly one fell, and then before they could reach Williams, he lifted his spurred foot, and slashed the face of the fallen man. Then they got him. Then the police started for him. They got him after a terrible fight. The other fellow died in the hospital shortly after." The warden shook his head. "He's a tough one. Never a muscle when they sentenced him."

"Too bad." Jim Kelton rose and picked up his hat. "Well, guess I'd better run along. Come out for a game of bridge some night, Tom. Ellen was saying the other day that we never see you any more."

The warden opened the door for his friend. "I'll be out some night soon," he promised, smiling.

As Williams stood waiting for the trusty to unlock the door of his cell, his eyes met those of Lawrie, the man in the next cell. Between the two had grown up an active dislike, the more threatening because unspoken. At least, so far. It remained for Claffin, across the way, to bring the thing out into the open. They were all discussing an expected arrival.

Said Claffin, "I guess this new bird is plenty tough. He murdered his wife and two kids. That's even worse than 'cowboy' there."

Lawrie cut in sneeringly. "I don't agree with you. He didn't carve 'em up afterwards like Williams did. Nobody in their right mind could do a thing like that. I couldn't, and neither could any of the rest of you fellows," he charged. No one answered. The others knew of the enmity between the two, and a strained silence filled the place. Then at last, Williams spoke, his voice hoarse, fairly quivering with rage.

"All right, Lawrie, you've said plenty. I'll remember it. And don't forget this; you'll be next! You'll be next!" he repeated, harshly. Lawrie laughed, mockingly. The guard coming down the hall put a stop to further conversation for the time being. But now the quarrel between the two was out in the open, and through the following days and weeks, Lawrie seemed possessed of some imp of perversity and taunted and giped at Williams continuously. Much of the time, the 'cowboy murderer' lay on his back on the cot and stared sullenly at the ceiling, only turning at times to throw Lawrie a venomous glance. At times, Lawrie grew ashamed for taunting a doomed man, but

something inside of him, stronger than he, urged him on implacably. Once in a while, he shuddered at the looks given him by the other, and silently he blessed the bars that kept them apart.

Then came William's last morning. The prison chaplain came to administer the last rites, but fled before the storm of curses that met him. After his departure, a long silence fell that lasted till they came for him. Even Lawrie was silent and sat soberly watching. As they brought him out, and he passed Lawrie, he stopped and looked in. His eyes, filled with immeasurable hatred, met those of Laurie. On his face was a malignant sneer.

"Remember, you're next," he said slowly, and passed on down the corridor. Lawrie watched his retreating form till it passed from sight. Claffin called across in a hoarse whisper. "What do you make of this; Williams asked them to bury him with his spurs on. Funny, isn't it?"

Lawrie did not answer for the reason that at the word 'spurs,' a queerly premonitory chill passed over him. Uneasily, he recalled the other's parting word and the cold, evil hatred of the other's glance. He tried to shake off the cold, chilly feeling that was settling over him, but without success. There seemed to be an indefinable change in the atmosphere, a sense of something horrible about to happen. They all felt it, in a lesser degree. The gray day dragged along, and conversation lagged. By common consent, they all avoided glancing at the empty cell. It seemed too potent a reminder of the thing that waited for them all. Dusk settled down and shadows began to fill the corners. And then Lawrie

glancing idly out the door of his cell, gave a startled cry. There in the shadows before his cell door, he saw something. A shadow that formed, that seemed to pause and linger before him. Then, as he cried out, it melted into nothing and was gone.

His heart was beating fast, pounding with the nameless fear that held him in an ever-tightening grip. The sense of impending calamity drew closer. He began to shake.

"What's wrong?" called Claffin, curiously, his voice low.

Lawrie, eyes fastened on the empty cell next to him, did not answer. He could not. He was watching something -- something that formed before his eyes into a man, a shadowy figure that smiled horribly and wore gleaming spurs. He saw it form, growing clearer and drawing nearer the bars. The shadowy eyes gazed back into his terrified ones, and then he screamed at the thing he read in them. A scream that died in his throat in a gurgle as he fell heavily.

The guard came running. "What's going on here?" he demanded, angrily. He peered in suspiciously at the fallen figure. At last they entered the silent cell and raised him to his cot. He was dead. And across the horror that death had stamped indelibly on his face, there ran the livid gash of a spur!

Supernatural Horror In Literature

(continued from page 58)

rim. And, of course, the more completely and unified a story conveys this atmosphere, the better it is as a work of art in the given medium.

(Next month Mr. Lovecraft takes up "The Dawn of the Horror Tale")

ABOUT AUTHORS

Clark Ashton Smith makes very little use of alliterations and has probably invented more alien names for the characters in his stories than any other author ... There are quite a few writers whose first initials are E.E.. A few of them are: Speight, Smith, Repp, Chappelow, and Newton... Miss Leslie F. Stone was taken for a man, even after her picture had been printed in *Wonder*. Probably that is why a new one was drawn for "The Hell Planet" in the June, 1932 number... Jack Williamson wrote science fiction more than three years before he tackled weird stories, and now seems to be doing a good job at both... Malcolm Afford's story, "The Gland Men of the Island" in *Wonder* was printed in *Amazing* by mistake over two years later under the name of "The Ho-Ming Gland." This case shows to what extent the editors revise each story. Compare both stories and you will find many changes of one over the other, especially at the conclusion... Kaw, Anthos, and Marius: authors without first names... Gernsback was the only editor who imported foreign stories and translated them into English for his science fiction publications. Fletcher Pratt, an author of note himself, usually does the translating... *Weird Tales* has had the largest number of authors who have never had a second story appear ... How many are familiar with Bertram Atkey's fantastic stories in *Blue Book*? In 1930 he had a series of humorous reincarnation stories published there...

...''...''

Come over to "Our Readers Say" and "The Boiling Point" and join in.

THE BOILING POINT

The Smith-Ackerman debate is still going strong, with Smith in the lead. However, the Ackerman side is taking a big leap with the following defenses. The first comes from Allen Glasser, who says:

"I am surprised at the vicious remarks being made about Forrest Ackerman. He really doesn't deserve any such abuse. Perhaps his writings are a bit flamboyant and over-enthusiastic; but surely that's no great fault. To those who know him well, Forrest is a fine fellow; and his zeal for science-fiction merits praise rather than censure."

Donald Alexander is all for Ackerman and wishes to make no secret of it:

"I've been watching the controversy in 'The Boiling Point.' It seems to me that young Forrest J. Ackerman is by far the most sensible of the lot. Instead of intelligently answering his arguments, Messrs. Smith, Lovecraft, Barlow, etc., have made fools of themselves descending to personalities. Ackerman is a most interesting type of 'crank.' (Everyone who writes in to a magazine is a 'crank.' So'm I). At least, F. J. A. shows signs of a rudimentary intelligence, which most cranks don't. I agree with him. 'The Light from Beyond' and several other Smith yarns, had no place in *Wonder Stories*. WS calls itself a science fiction magazine. Smith's story under discussion isn't science fiction, so, it had no place in such a magazine. F. J. A. is right there. I see no reason why Lovecraft should condemn Ackerman for not liking Smith. After all, we each have our own tastes. Smith, in my own opinion, is a poor writer. His

stories are all like the ravings of some fearfully diseased mind. Lovecraft, on the other hand, is a fairly good writer. But I'm wasting good typewriter ink; your readers haven't enough intelligence to grasp such a common sense argument as the one presented by Ackerman, so they call him a nitwit, while he actually has more sense than the lot of them thrown together. If there were a hundred-million Forrest J. Ackermans in the world, it'd be a better place to live in, at least we'd have a little common sense used occasionally."

Now, while we are very glad to find defenses on the Ackerman side, we must disagree with Mr. Alexander when he calls our readers too ignorant to grasp an argument put forth by Mr. Ackerman. Their eager disapproval with logical objections contradicts this theory. And then again, the mere fact that they are science fiction and weird fans puts them above the average, for such readers must be broadminded and open minded, and not the "What's-good-enough-for-father-is-good-enough-for-me" or "There-ain't-no-such-animal" types. We believe that this letter leaves cause for rebuttal on the part of Messrs. Smith and Lovecraft.

Forrest J. Ackerman, of course, does not like the way he has been treated, and has this to say about it:

"Pardon me, do; but why did you run 'The Boiling Point' in a foreign language? What a vocalberry on those Weird Men Smith and Lovecraft! And I think I'll have to change my tag from 'Forrest J. Ackerman, Scientifictionist' to 'Forrest J. Ackerman, Ebullitionist'. The two got the word in within the first line of comments. Now Mr. Smith will be

calling Mr. Lovecraft 'Plagiarist', and then maybe Mr. 'Smith (the 'Skylark') will burst in and say that HE owns the original. Let's have a contest...Just thought of it--the original Paul illustration that I treasure *would* be from *Smith's* story, 'The City of the Singing Flame.' I don't get the connection: the Lovecraft says in print 'a very childish attack', and in his personal reply to me 'your bright and candid letter.'!?"

It can be seen by the above letter that Ackerman really holds no hard feeling toward the Weird Men; just a bit of mockery and rare Ackerman wit.

Just to show that we are always open to both sides, following are a couple of fans who still choose to 'lay it on thick.'

"Personally, I thought that 'The Light From Beyond' was very good, and I certainly could see nothing weird about it. It was fantasy, yes, and not stf, but some of the greatest classics of so-called science fiction have been almost pure fantasy. Witness: 'The Snake Mother,' 'The Moon Pool,' 'The Time Stream' (Ackerman's objection to this was particularly obnoxious to me, as I thought it was one of the best stories ever written. Certainly it offered the most food for thought), 'The Skylark of Space' (partly fantasy), 'The Princess of Mars,' and other greats. Certainly, there should be something more to science fiction than rays, machines, villains, heroines, (composed of lipstick and legs, as Mr. Barlow rather bitterly expresses it) as has been stressed so greatly of late. There should be an element of fantasy, strong character, and a well-developed plot in addition. The lack of those is why so many weird story lovers (like Mr. Barlow) can find so much fault

with stf. I do not blame him. I, myself, as a reader, will stop reading stf when the fantasy element is dropped completely." William Crawford (Editor of *Unusual Stories*)

"What does this Ackerman guy know about weird and fantastic fiction? From the way he writes, he must be an unimaginative person unable to stretch his mind away from space-ships and foreign star-clusters. I get that he is an egotistical radical and one who doesn't like something that is not even intended for him. So far, in telling about his collection, he has described a sort of madhouse. However, I certainly would like to see this madhouse, as I can appreciate a thing or two that is connected with stf. At heart, I am truly a weird and fantastic fiction fan."

--F. Lee Baldwin

There seems to be enough controversy in this month's discussion to bring in enough letters to fill next month's. Write in and give us your opinions on the subject. Are Smith's tales fit for *Wonder Stories*? Does Ackerman know what he's talking about, and are the Weird Men justified in their criticisms of him? Here's hoping to hear from you.

◆◆◆◆◆

Man is in truth but cosmic dust,
Which by a sudden whirling gust
Of forces from unbounded space,
Spread o'er this planet's tiny face.

.....

If you think that you have anything worth-while to contribute to

THE FANTASY FAN

send it in to us for our very serious consideration, we are always glad to get material from our readers.

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IF YOU HAVE any copies of Weird Tales dated 1923-24-25-26-27, that you would like to part with, please communicate with the Editor.

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S o o n
