

# THE FANTASY FAN

## THE FANS' OWN MAGAZINE

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### AN APOLOGY

On page 143 of our May issue, we published an article entitled "About H. G. Wells." According to the by-line, it was written by Daniel McPhail. The author was R. H. Barlow. We wish to apologize to R. H. Barlow, Daniel McPhail, and our readers, for this mistake, and suggest that contributors always sign their articles in the future to avoid these mixups.

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### OUR READERS SAY

"Some will perhaps wonder what I precisely meant, in my dialog in the May issue, when my charcter, Sidney, exclaimed, 'And if scribes could only emulate Smith or Lovecraft or Howard!' I meant, of course, that writers should strive to these three in *greatness* —but a greatness of a different sort. For there can only be *one* Clark Ashton Smith, *one* H. P. Lovecraft, *one* Robert E. Howard. But the aspiring writer can always form himself on a good model; and in time, he will find his *own* individuality. I wish to see another tale by Eando Binder, as well as

a story by J. Harvey Haggard, and more poetry by William Lumley."

— Robert Nelson

"I find the June FANTASY FAN interesting. This story is really good, the one by H. P. Lovecraft. Science in a weird atmosphere, 'From Beyond,' interesting, and the story worked out completely satisfactorily. This will probably horrify a number of readers, but as far as I know, this is the first story I have ever liked by Lovecraft; but I like it very well. The word wanderings of 'Prose Pastels' number three are a bit entrancing. F. Lee Baldwin seems worth his increased column." — Forrest J. Ackerman

"The June FANTASY FAN contained everything that goes to make a magazine successful — I need not list the splendid array of stories and artices that you have somehow condensed into one issue." — Duane W. Rimel

"The June number was very well done. In addition to my old stand-bys Lovecraft and Smith, I was pleased with Haggard's little note on 'Books of the Weird.' I'd like to see more of such articles. 'Weird Whiperings' is one of my favorite colmnns."

— H. Koenig



"Enjoyed the latest FANTASY FAN—an excellent issue. The cover of different colour adds to the effect."

— H. P. Lovecraft

"Please print only short stories, the shorter the better, and no serials. Also give us a greater variety of authors. Let's have poetry in every issue, but not too much of Smith's heavy ones. All eight pieces printed so far have been fine! Very glad to see the way you're encouraging amateurs."

— William H. Dellenback

"I wish to commend Mr. Lumley's remarkable poem, 'Shadows,' in the May TFF. This poem seems to have in it all the mystic immemorial anguish and melancholy of China. The quatrain, 'Dragons,' is a vivid picture too. I enjoyed 'Phantom Lights,' 'The Flower God,' and the various departments—in fact, the entire contents of the magazine."—Clark Ashton Smith

"The June issue of THE FANTASY FAN was great! I enjoyed immensely the fine tale by H. P. Lovecraft, 'From Beyond.' It was extremely well-written and lacked nothing in my estimation. I hope that I shall enjoy many more of Mr. Lovecraft's splendid stories."

— Fred John Walsen

"I note in 'Weird Whisperings' that Seabury Quinn gets most of his plots while shaving. According to the looks of things in 'Weird Tales,' Mr. Quinn is sporting a long, long beard. Also in 'Weird Whisperings' the nas-synsnoopers are revealing the real names of authors. Now—febbensake—why do writers use *nom-de-plumes* if they let the readers know their real names? What can be the use of pen-names in

such a case? As for 'Prose Pastels,' I must say I'm going to offer my first criticism to Clark Ashton Smith. After reading 'The Muse of Hyperborea,' I sez to myself, 'I'll bite! What is it?' You tell me—I can't figure it out. Another thing I must slam Mr. Smith for is his use of obsolete and rare words. Not that I don't enjoy them—they make the stories so much more—so-so—but I dunno what they mean—my dictionary is pretty big—but doesn't contain all those words."

— Gertrude Hemken

"The June 1934 FANTASY FAN is pleasing to the eyes with its bright yellow cover. Please make Lovecraft's 'Supernatural Horror in Literature' at least four pages long. 'Side Glances' and 'Weird Whisperings' are interesting. You ought to discontinue 'Your Views,' since it offers nothing of value." — Charles H. Bert

"I was sure pleased with this month's TFF, and I especially liked 'Prose Pastels' by Clark Ashton Smith; also 'From Beyond' by H. P. Lovecraft. Glad to see you are going to print such fine material as is unjustifiably rejected by other magazines. Some of the real gems of literature are sometimes never printed professionally, but thanks to semi-amateur magazines like TFF, the efforts of an author is not entirely lost. Let's have more by Mr. Lovecraft. Schwartz and Weisinger have certainly been around quite a bit lately. Their stuff is brand new and very interesting as well as amazing."

— F. Lee Baldwin

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## WEIRD WHISPERINGS

by Schwartz and Weisinger

Seabury Quinn returns to *Weird Tales* in the September issue with the latest Jules de Grandin thriller, "The Jest of Warburg Tantavul"...In prospect for publication in *Weird* in the near future, but not as yet scheduled, are two stories of brain transplantation by Bassett Morgan, entitled "The Vengeance of Fi Fong" and "Black Bagheela," with great apes and sinister Chinamen springing out of every corner to horrify and amaze the reader...All of H. P. Lovecraft's tales are sold to WT with the understanding that nothing whatever is to be changed in them..."The Waning of a World" by W. Elwyn Backus, an old *Weird Tales* serial, was reprinted in *Aviation & Mechanics* under the title "A Leap to Mars."

The "Weird Tales" radio program announced some time ago in the Eyrie, has not been given up, but the Hollywood Radio Attractions, Inc., which is handling the broadcasts and the making of the electrical transcriptions, ran into difficulties in trying to get sponsors for the program. However, they are pressing forward in a drive to obtain sponsors in all the various districts...Paul Ernst, who is about 33 years old, has sold over 300 stories to more than 50 magazines since 1926...A serial novel set in the Sahara Desert, entitled "Rulers of the Future," written by Ernst, is slated for publication in *Weird* next winter...The tale of a mild-appearing, bespectacled American physicist who in a few days forced the world to destroy its

armaments and agree to perpetual peace is narrated in S. Gordon Gurwitt's next *Weird Tales* story "The Golden Glow."

Mysterious letters postmarked from Washington, D. C., consisting of two mimeographed pages bearing the title "The Battle that Ended the Century" have been received by several well-known fantasy authors, editors and fans. It is a satire, and the character's names are those of popular people in the fantasy field, being thinly veiled. Seabury Quinn wrote Farnsworth Wright that if he didn't know that he lived in Chicago he'd swear that Wright had written them. Frank Belknap Long, Jr. feels confident that they were authored by H. P. Lovecraft who is now touring in the South. "I'm too well acquainted with Howard's (Howard Lovecraft) style," he declared, "to mistake it. It's just a gag."...

"The Distortion out of Space" by Francis Flagg, an ingenious tale of the fourth dimension to appear in the August WT, has a very strange illustration by Harold R. Hammond...The same number will contain a weird-scientific story by Frank Belknap Long Jr., entitled "The Beast-Helper," a story based on the craze for dictatorships that is epidemic in Europe just now...Long, Jr., has crashed *Astounding Stories* with "The Last Men," to appear in the August number...On hand for a coming issue of *Weird* is "Yellow Doom" by Robert H. Leifred, a smashing, quick-moving tale on the old theme of an oriental despot who by his mastery of science tries to make himself ruler of the world.



## THE END OF "SCOOPS"

Hugo Gernsback recently received the following letter from L. B. Silvester, the founder of "Scoops," the first English all-stf magazine that we've been hearing so much about.

"In October of last year, I got at the board of Messrs. C. Arthur Pearson, Ltd., of London, one of our big publishing houses. With your magazine as an example, I strove to convince the powers that be. They finally made a compromise—they would turn out an ambiguous sort of cheap weekly which could assume definite adult or juvenile characteristics upon receipt of those indications which a few months of circulation would give.

"A putrid sort of thing suffering under the name of SCOOPS was what resulted. Together, Mr. F. Hadyn Dimock and myself tried to do what was right and what the board wanted at the same time. I wrote a story and some short articles every week; he did the editing. Finally we got the board's consent for this form, but it was too late. The frivolous name condemned it and the fact that in fifteen weeks it had picked up a reputation for blood-and-thunder which it could never have lived down. We asked for more money to re-launch it in the form we had first visualized, but we were refused! The paper had failed. Britain's first and only scientifiction paper had failed with in four months of its inception, and this in face of the fact that nowadays science has an interest, to some extent, for everyone, and is to be found on the screen and stage, and in the daily press."

## WITHIN THE CIRCLE

by F. Lee Baldwin

R. H. Barlow is a very talented youth. He is a pianist, painter, sculptor in clay, landscape gardener and book collector. He has completed a clay bas-relief of Cthulhu and a statuette of Ganesa, the Hindoo Elephant God. One of his favorite bindings for his books is snake skin. He shoots many snakes around his home in Florida and tans the skin.

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"The Last Heiroglyph" by Clark Ashton Smith, which is scheduled in WT is the last of a series of stories of the fabulous land of Zothique. The first of the series was "The Empire of Necromancers." WT has on hand another story of Zothique — "The Dark Eidolon"... William Crawford, Editor of Marvel Tales, holds for publication "The Coming of the White Worm." It may be issued in a separate booklet. This is the first chapter of The Book of Eibon.

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Do you remember Loretta Burrough who wrote "Creeping Fingers"? She has a yarn titled "What Waits in Darkness" slated for a future WT.

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H. P. Lovecraft is touring the South. He is making Savannah, St. Augustine, Charleston, and other places that were founded in the *early* days of this country, and also visiting R. H. Barlow of De Land, Fla.

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Clark Ashton Smith wrote and published at 17 a book of poems called "The Star Trader."



# The Epiphany of Death

by Clark Ashton Smith

(Dedicated to H. P. Lovecraft)

I find it peculiarly difficult to express the exact nature of the sentiment which Tomeron had always evoked in me. However, I am sure that the feeling never partook, at any time, of what is ordinarily known as friendship. It was a compound of unusual esthetic and intellectual elements, and was somehow closely allied in my thoughts with the same fascination that has drawn me ever since early childhood toward all things that are remote in space and time, or which have about them the irresolvable twilight of antiquity. Somehow, Tomeron seemed never to belong to the present; but one could readily have imagined him as living in some bygone age. About him, there was nothing whatever of the lineaments of our own period; and he even went so far as to affect in his costume an approximation to the garments that were worn several centuries ago. His complexion was extremely pale and cadaverous, and he stooped heavily from poring over ancient tomes and no less ancient maps. He moved always with the slow, meditative pace of one who dwells among far-off reveries and memories; and he spoke often of people and events and ideas that have long been forgotten. For the most part, he was apparently unheedful of present things; and I felt that for him the huge city of Ptolemides, in which we both dwelt,

with all its manifold clamor and tumult, was little more than a labyrinth of painted vapors. Oddly enough, there was a like vagueness in the attitude of others toward Tomeron; and though he had always been accepted without question as a representative of the noble and otherwise extinct family from which he claimed descent, nothing appeared to be known about his actual birth and antecedents. With two servants, who were both deaf-mutes, who were very old and who likewise wore the raiment of a former age, he lived in the semi-ruinous mansion of his ancestors, where, it was said, none of the family had dwelt for many generations. There he pursued the occult and recondite studies that were so congenial to his mind; and there, at certain intervals, I was wont to visit him.

I cannot recall the precise date and circumstances of the beginning of my acquaintance with Tomeron. Though I come of a hardy line that is noted for the sanity of its constitution, my faculties have been woefully shaken by the horror of the happening with which that acquaintance ended. My memory is not what it was, and there are certain lacunae, for which my readers must contrive to forgive me. The only wonder is, that my powers of recollection have survived at all, beneath the hideous burden they have had to bear; for, in a



more than metaphoric sense, I have been as one condemned to carry with him at all times and in all places the loathsome incubus of things long dead and corrupt.

I can readily recall, however, the studies to which Tomeron had devoted himself, the lost demonian volumes from Hyperborea and Mu and Atlantis with which his library shelves were heaped to the ceiling, and the queer charts, not of any land that lies above the surface of the earth, on which he pored by perpetual candle-light. I shall not speak of these studies, for they would seem too fantastic and too macabre for credibility; and that which I have to relate is incredible enough in itself. I shall speak, however, of certain strange ideas with which Tomeron was much pre-occupied, and concerning which he so often discoursed to me in that deep, guttural and monotonous voice of his, that had the reverberation of unsounded caverns in its tones and cadences. He maintained that life and death were not the fixed conditions that people commonly believed them to be; that the two realms were often intermingled in ways not readily discerned, and had penumbral borders; that the dead were not always dead, nor the living, as such terms are habitually understood. But the manner in which he spoke of those ideas was extremely vague and general; and I could never induce him to specify his meaning or to proffer some concrete illustration that would render it intelligible to a mentality such as mine, that was unused to dealing in the cobwebs of abstraction. Behind his words, there hovered, or seemed to hover, a legion of dark, amorphous images that I could never formulate or depict to myself in any way,

till the fatal denouement of our descent into the catacombs of Ptolemides.

I have already said that my feeling for Tomeron was never anything that could be classified as friendship. But even from the first, I was well aware that Tomeron had a curious fondness for me—a fondness whose nature I could not comprehend, and with which I could hardly even sympathize. Though he fascinated me at all times, there were occasions when my interest was not unalloyed with a sense of actual repulsion. At ~~whiles~~, his pallor was ~~too~~ cadaverous, too suggestive of fungi that have grown in the dark, or of leprous bones by moonlight; and the stoop of his shoulders conveyed to my brain the idea that they bore a burden of centuries through which no man could conceivably have lived. He aroused always a certain awe in me; and the awe was sometimes mingled with an indeterminate fear.

I do not remember how long our acquaintance had continued; but I do remember that he spoke with increasing frequency, toward the end, of those bizarre ideas at which I have hinted. Also, I felt that he was troubled about something, for he often looked at me with a mournful gleam in his hollow eyes; and sometimes he would speak, with peculiar stress, of the great regard that he had for me. And one night he said:

"Theolus, the time is coming when you must know the truth—must know me as I am, and not as I have been permitted to seem. There is a term to all things, and all things are obedient to inexorable laws. I would that it were otherwise, but neither I nor any man, among the living or among the dead,



can lengthen at will the term of any state or condition of being, or alter the laws that decree such conditions."

Perhaps it was well that I did not understand him, and that I was unable to attach much importance to his words or to the singular intentness of his bearing as he uttered them. For a few more days, I was spared the knowledge which I now carry. Then, one evening, Tomeron spoke thus:

"I am now compelled to ask an odd favor of you, which I hope you will grant me, in consideration of our long friendship. The favor is, that you accompany me this very night to those vaults of my family which lie in the catacombs of Ptolemides."

Though much surprised by the request, and not altogether pleased, I was nevertheless unable to deny him. I could not imagine the purpose of such a visit as the one proposed; but, as was my wont, I forebore to interrogate Tomeron, and merely told him that I would accompany him to the vaults if such were his desire.

"I thank you, Theolus, for this proof of friendship," he replied earnestly. "Believe me, I am loath to ask it; but there has been a certain deception, an odd misunderstanding which cannot go on any longer. To-night, you will know the truth."

Carrying torches, we left the mansion of Tomeron and sought the ancient catacombs of Ptolemides, which lie beyond the walls and have long been disused, for there is now a fine necropolis in the very heart of the city. The moon had gone down beyond the desert that encroaches toward the catacombs; and we were forced to light our torches long be-

fore we came to the subterranean adits; for the rays of Mars and Jupiter in a sodden and funereal sky were not enough to illumine the perilous path we followed among mounds and fallen obelisks and broken graves. At length we discovered the dark and weed-choked entrance of the charnels; and here Tomeron led the way with a swiftness and surety of footing that bespoke long familiarity with the place.

Entering, we found ourselves in a crumbling passage where the bones of dilapidated skeletons were scattered amid the rubble that had fallen from the sides and roof. A choking stench of stagnant air and of age-old corruption made me pause for a moment; but Tomeron scarcely appeared to perceive it, for he strode onward, lifting his torch and beckoning me to follow. We traversed many vaults in which mouldy bones and verdigris-eaten sarcophagi were piled about the walls or strewn where desecrating thieves had left them in bygone years. The air was increasingly dank, chill and miasmal; and mephitic shadows crouched or swayed before our torches in every niche and corner. Also, as we went onward, the walls became more ruinous and the bones we saw on every hand were greener with the mould of time.

At last we rounded a sudden angle of the low cavern we were following. Here we came to vaults that evidently belonged to some noble family, for they were quite spacious and there was but one sarcophagus in each vault.

"My ancestors and my family lie here," said Tomeron.

We reached the end of the cavern and were confronted by a blank wall. At one side, was the final vault, in



which an empty sarcophagus stood open. The sarcophagus was wrought of the finest bronze and was richly carven.

Tomeron paused before the vault and turned to me. By the flickering uncertain light, I thought that I saw a look of strange and unaccountable distress on his features.

"I must beg you to withdraw for a moment," he said, in a low and sorrowful voice. "Afterwards, you can return."

Surprised and puzzled, I obeyed his request and went slowly back along the cavern for some distance. Then I returned to the place where I had left him. My surprise was heightened when I found that he had extinguished his torch and had dropped it on the threshold of the final vault. Also, Tomeron himself was not visible anywhere.

Entering the vault, since there was no other place where he could have hidden himself, I looked about for him, but the room was empty. At least, I deemed it empty till I looked again at the richly carven sarcophagus and saw that it was now tenanted, for a cadaver lay within, shrouded in a winding sheet of a sort that has not been used for centuries in Ptolemides.

I drew nigh to the sarcophagus, and peering into the face of the cadaver, I saw that it bore a fearful and strange resemblance to the face of Tomeron, though it was bloated and puffed with the adipocere of death and was purple with the shadows of decay, as after long ages in a charnel air. And looking again, I saw that it was indeed Tomeron.

I would have screamed aloud with the horror that came upon me; but my lips were benumbed and frozen, and I

## SMOKE WITHOUT FIRE

(A True Experience)

by Kenneth B. Pritchard

I chanced to be alone at the time. I was just about to enter the kitchen of the house. I opened the door and went in.

I glanced over toward the gas stove near a window. Close to it a cloud of smoke streamed upward. It had the appearance of an easy rolling mass just expelled from the lungs of a smoker. I also compared it to a match that had just been extinguished. In fact, I thought that a mouse had lit one.

I went to the stove, which had not been used for some hours, and looked for a match recently ignited, or even for some oily substance which the sun might have caused to smoke.

Everything was cold. The sun had not warmed anything. No match had been lit. But, I had seen smoke rising!

A friend of mine saw smoke rise in front of her, also. She too, could ascertain no reason or source.

What then really happened? Is it some indigenous quality of the air that was the cause?

.....  
could only whisper Tomeron's name. But as I whispered it, the lips of the cadaver seemed to part, and the tip of its tongue protruded between them. And I thought that the tip trembled, as if Tomeron were about to speak and answer me. But gazing more closely I saw that the trembling was merely the movement of worms as they twisted up and down and to and fro, and sought to crowd each other from Tomeron's tongue.



SUPERNATURAL HORROR  
IN LITERATURE

by H. P. Lovecraft

## Part Ten

(Copyright 1927 by W. Paul Cook)

"Melmoth" contains scenes which even now have not lost their power to evoke dread. It begins with a death-bed—the old miser is dying of sheer fright because of something he has seen, coupled with a manuscript he has read and a family portrait which hangs in an obscure closet of his centuried home in County Wicklow. He sends to Trinity College, Dublin, for his nephew John; and the latter upon arriving notes many uncanny things. The eyes of the portrait in the closet glow horribly, and twice a figure strangely resembling the portrait appears momentarily at the door. Dread hangs over the house of the Melmoths, one of whose ancestors, "J. Melmoth, 1646," the portrait represents. The dying miser declares that this man—at a date slightly before 1800—is still alive. Finally the miser dies, and the nephew is told in the will to destroy both the portrait and a manuscript to be found in a certain drawer. Reading the manuscript, which was written late in the seventeenth century by an Englishman named Stanton, young John learns of a terrible incident in Spain in 1677, when the writer met a horrible fellow-countryman and was told of how he had stared to death a priest who tried to denounce him as one filled with fearsome evil. Later, after meeting the man again in London, Stanton is cast into a madhouse and

visited by the stranger, whose approach is heralded by spectral music and whose eyes have more than mortal glare. Melmoth the Wanderer—for such is the malign visitor—offers the captive freedom if he will take over his bargain with the Devil; but like all others whom Melmoth has approached, Stanton is proof against temptation. Melmoth's description of the horrors of a life in a madhouse, used to tempt Stanton, is one of the most potent passages of the book. Stanton is at length liberated, and spends the rest of his life tracking down Melmoth, whose family and ancestral abode discovers. With the family he leaves the manuscript, which by young John's time is sadly ruinous and fragmentary. John destroys both portrait and manuscript, but in sleep is visited by his horrible ancestor, who leaves a black and blue mark on his wrist.

Young John soon afterward receives as a visitor a shipwrecked Spaniard, Alonzo de Moncada, who has escaped from compulsory monasticism and from the perils of the Inquisition. He has suffered horribly—and the descriptions of his experiences under torment and in the vaults through which he once essays escape are classic—but had the strength to resist Melmoth the Wanderer when approached at this darkest hour in prison. At the house of a Jew who sheltered him after his escape, he discovers a wealth of manuscript relating other exploits of Melmoth, including his wooing of an Indian island maiden, Immalee, who later comes to her birthright in Spain and is known as the Donna Isidora;

(continued on page 171)





## I

In distant Yith past crested, ragged peaks;  
 On far-flung islands lost to worldly years,  
 A shadow from the ancient star-void seeks  
 Some being which in caverns shrilly cries  
 A challenge; and the hairy dweller speaks  
 From that deep hole where slimy Sotho lies.  
 But when those night-winds crept about the place,  
 They fled—for Sotho had no human face!

## II

Beyond the valleys of the sun which lie  
 In misty chaos past the reach of time;  
 And brood beneath the ice as aeons fly,  
 Long waiting for some brighter, warmer clime;  
 There is a vision, as I vainly try  
 To glimpse the madness that must some day climb  
 From age-old tombs in dim dimensions hid,  
 And push all angles back—unseal the lid!

## III

Beside the city that once lived there wound  
 A stream of putrefaction writhing black;  
 Reflecting crumbling spires stuck in the ground  
 That glow through hov'ring mist whence no stray track  
 Can lead to those dead gates, where once was found  
 The secret that would bring the dwellers back.  
 And still that pitch-black current eddies by  
 Those silver gates of Yith to sea-beds dry.

## IV

On rounded turrets rising through the visne  
 Of cloud-veiled aeons that the Old Ones knew:  
 On tablets deeply worn and fingered clean



By tentacles that dreamers seldom view;  
 In space-hung Yith, on clammy walls obscene  
 That writhe and crumble and are built anew;  
 There is a figure carved; but God! those eyes,  
 That sway on fungoid stems at leaden skies!

## V

Around the place of ancient, waiting blight;  
 On walls of sheerest opal rearing high,  
 That move as planets beckon in the night  
 To faded realms where nothing sane can lie;  
 A deathless guard tramps by in feeble light,  
 Emitting to the stars a sobbing cry.  
 But on that path where footsteps should have led  
 There rolled an eyeless, huge and bloated head.



### Supernatural Horror in Literature (continued from page 169)

and of his horrible marriage to her by the corpse of a dead anchorite at midnight in the ruined chapel of a shunned and abhorred monastery. Moncada's narrative to young John takes up the bulk of Maturin's four-volume book; this disproportion being considered one of the chief technical faults of the composition.

At last the colloquies of John and Moncada are interrupted by the entrance of Melmoth the Wanderer himself, his piercing eyes now fading, and decrepitude swiftly overtaking him. The term of his bargain has approached its end, and he has come home after a century and a half to meet his fate. Warning all others from the room, no matter what sounds they may hear in the night, he awaits the end alone. Young John and Moncada hear frightful ululations, but do not intrude till silence comes toward morning. They then find the room empty. Clayey footprints lead out a rear door

to a cliff overlooking the sea, and near the edge of the precipice is a track indicating the forcible dragging of some heavy body. The Wanderer's scarf is found on a crag some distance below the brink, but nothing further is ever seen or heard of him. Such is the story, and none can fail to notice the difference between this modulated, suggestive, and artistically moulded horror and—to use the words of Professor George Saintsbury—"the artful but rather jejune rationalism of Mrs. Radcliffe, and the too often puerile extravagance, the bad taste, and the sometimes slipshod style of Lewis." Maturin's style in itself deserves particular praise, for its forcible directness and vitality lift it altogether above the pompous artificialities of which his predecessors are guilty. Professor Edith Birkhead, in her history of the Gothic novel, justly observes that "with all his faults, Maturin was the greatest as well as the last of the Goths." "Melmoth" was widely  
 (continued on page 176)



SCIENCE FICTION IN  
ENGLISH MAGAZINES

by Bob Tucker  
(Series Seven)

A late May issue of TRIUMPH carried "Invisible Charlie" by Tom Stirling. (No reflections on you, Editor). However, the story was of juvenile character, and the most terrible thing Invisible Charlie did was to make a ball do funny tricks, on its way from the pitcher to the batter, Invisible Charlie himself carrying it, of course.

Vol. 1, numbers 15 and 16 of SCOOPS presented: Two chapters of Doyle's "Poison Belt," two of "Devilman of the Deep," and two of "Black Vultures," leaving very little short story space.

Number 15 had "Fighting Gas" which is self explanatory, and "The March of the Berserks," mentioned previously. Number 16, besides the serials already mentioned, had "The Accelerator Ray" which speeds up life, and "Temple of Doom" which is a sort of "suspended animation" tale, with its usual Man from the past waking in the future twist.

The cover of 16 is "Mails by Rocket" and portrays two rockets flying over London with the mail.

Incidentally, although not a part of this dept., I would like to mention that there are "Rocket Mail" stamps on sale over there! Regular rocket mail service is carried on in parts of Europe, and special stamps have been issued for it. The two I have seen portray huge rockets taking off, with long streamers of fire behind. Price is 1 mark and 10 Groschen.

## FAMOUS FANTASY FICTION

by Emil Petaja

The Supernatural Omnibus, edited by Montague Summers; Doubleday Doran Co. This remarkable collection contains thirty-six stories of the best fantasy fiction. It is of particular interest to American readers as most of it's stories are taken from English magazines and out-of-print books which most of us would find difficult to obtain. The introduction is especially interesting.

A. Conan Doyle has written several books of a scientific and weird nature. Perhaps the best of these is "The Maracot Deep." In this story the scientific theme predominates, until the very last chapter, in which we find a typical *Jules de Grandin* finis. Among the other stories in this book, "When the Earth Screamed" is easily the best. This book can now be had in the 75 cent reprint list.

"Famous Mystery Stories" and "Famous Ghost Stories" both edited by J. W. McSpadden contain many old favorites, such as O'Brien's "The Diamond Lens," Crawford's "The Upper Berth," and de Maupassant's "Horla." You can get these books at any public library.

Ghosts, Grim and Gentle, edited by L. C. French; Dodd, Mead & Co. Although many of the stories in this volume have been reprinted very often, it is well worth reading. One of it's best is "The Tractate Middoth," by Dr. M. R. James; mentioned by Clark Ashton Smith in his article in the February *Fantasy Fan*.



# Rider By Night

by David H. Keller

I asked one of the small boys playing around the schoolhouse,

"Does Miss Belle Flowers teach here?"

She did, and two minutes later I was in her class room, our conversation being listened to with much interest by the twenty-odd little boys and girls in the room. It seemed that she was expecting me, and that I could make the examination in twenty minutes after school was closed. So I decided to wait out side.

It was a modern eight room consolidated country school, which seemed to be built miles from everywhere. On one side, an old Ford car, three buggies, and at least fifteen saddle-horses were parked. A few shabby shrubs shivered silently in the sallow sunshine of spring. Here and there remnants of building material told the story of the building's recent construction.

Walking along, I turned the corner of the building and looked toward the west. What I saw made me walk away from the school-house to a white-haired darkey sitting on the ground propped against a wire fence. He seemed asleep, but when I came near him, he turned to me a wearisome face with two eyes circled with the arcus senilis of the aged.

I asked him to have a cigarette, and lit it for him; then sat down by his side.

"Queer place for a school house, Uncle," I said.

"Worsen queer. Poor and hard on us."

"How come?"

"Quality folks put it heayr, whar land was cheap. Peers like they didn't know about Massa."

"Your Master?"

"None but."

I looked over at the tombstone. Just one stone, and at the back of it a cypress tree. Four fence posts around the tree and the stone, and then were connected by a wire fence. The posts were newly placed, the wire made up of odds and ends tied together and nailed in place with every kind of nail imaginable.

I handed the old man another cigarette and a silver dollar.

"Tell me about it," I asked.

It was a short story. The Colonel had gone to war in '61 and his servant had gone with him. In '62 the negro had brought his Master back blind. Years later he had died, and was buried on the knoll, and a cypress was planted at the head of the grave. Now he was forgotten by all except the whitened slave. The land had been sold and a school house built on it. Today was the first day of school. The old man, afraid that the grave would be desecrated by the cheap white trash, had dug four holes, put in four posts, wired them and was now sitting guard till school was out and the children gone.

"The Colonel shure wouldn't like it. Gwine to bother him riding."

"Does he ride?" I asked.

"Bound to. That air man was almost borned in saddle. He rid to the war and he rid back, blind tho he war, and



he rides ever since. He done told me, 'Sam, I am bound to ride till Miss Belle Flowers marries me.' Corse, he done gone to Heaven years ago, but every night he rides on his white mare, and I done kiver me head with the blanket when Ise hear her hoofs go pounding up and down the road."

"He was going to marry Miss Belle Flowers?" I asked.

It appeared so. They were engaged when he rode away and when he came back blind, she was married to another. Every night he had the white mare saddled and would gallop up and down the road in front of her house. He and the mare died the same day, and according to his will, the Colonel and the Colonel's horse were buried in the same grave.

School was dismissed. The children piled into the old Ford, into the old buggies, on top of the saddle horses, one, two and even three to the horse. The school teachers, young and old, seven of them, left the building. It was time for my examination of Miss Belle Flowers.

I threw the rest of my cigarettes to the old negro,

"You have fixed the Colonel," I laughed. "With that fence around the grave, he cannot get the mare out for his ride tonight."

He looked at me with puzzled eyes.

"Massa's gwine ter ride. Just bound to ride till he marries Miss Belle. Come sundown, Ise gwine to open the fence to let him and the mare out. Warm tonight, and I'll sleep heyr. Massa may need me."

After talking to Miss Flowers, I told her that I was rather doubtful of her obtaining the life insurance; after I listened to her lungs, I was sure that she was

a bad risk. A history of two yeas in bed fighting tuberculosis made me hesitate. She looked strong and as pretty as a rose, but today, at the end of school, she had fever.

We talked it over outside the school-house. We said goodbye twice. Somehow it was difficult to say goodbye and leave her. To gain time, I asked her about Sam. It seemed that Sam went insane when the Colonel died. There was a long story about it. Eventually I said goodbye again at her front gate and promised to call that night and hear the story.

There was a full moon that night.

She was waiting for me on the gallery, dressed in a riding habit of the sixties, when ladies rode a side saddle.

"My Grandmother's," she explained laughingly. "Yes, you have guessed it, especially if Sam talked to you. In 1860 Belle Flowers, pride of western Kentucky was engaged to the Colonel. They rode together, each on a white horse. She wore the dress I have on. I thought it would make the story more real to you if I wore her dress tonight. The Colonel went to war and Sam went with him. My Grandmother was fickle and married her cousin, another Flowers, and when the Colonel came back stone blind, it was too late. He swore that he would night-ride past her house till she married him. Grandmother used to tell me what a sight it was to see him go galloping by on his white mare, and no one able to tell by the way he rode that he couldn't see. She died years before he did, but he kept riding on, just as though he didn't know she was dead. Then one night he and the white mare died, and that was the end of the Colonel.



Of course, Sam says he still rides."

"He does indeed, but of course that is just his insanity."

"Yes, just his insanity," Miss Flowers agreed. "I talked to him today about the patchwork fence he built around the grave, but he explained that he would take a piece down to let his Master out on the horse. In summer, he sleeps up there; says he never can tell when the Colonel will want him. It all seems so real to him."

She laughed, as though tense with suppressed excitement.

"It is good to have you call on me tonight," she whispered. "I hardly ever see anyone except Father, and he is moody. Don't want me to leave the house at night. Made me promise not to leave the gallery unless you went too."

"He knows about me?"

"Oh, yes, everyone knows about the new doctor. Let's walk down to the gate. In full moonlight, you can see the white of the Colonel's tombstone."

Picking up the trail of her riding habit, she went before me, down to the gate and opened it. She showed me a spot of white through the trees. I took her hand. It was cold.

"Night-riders," she said suddenly. "Two of them! Hear them come galloping down the road."

I heard nothing but a hoot owl in the bottoms.

Then something lashed me across the face, striking me to the ground. When I stood up, I was alone. Running into the house, I found Mr. Flowers.

"You are hurt!" he cried. "Slashed across the face with a riding whip. But you should have stayed on the gallery. Belle ought to have known better than

to wear that dress. I told her not to, but you know how headstrong those girls are."

"That is not getting her back. Get a lantern. We have got to find her."

"We will go through the fields. There is a short cut. You light the lantern while I get a shawl for her. God, but it's cold and there's a black cloud over the moon."

I carried the shawl and almost had to run behind him as he carried the lantern over the hill. We came to the corner of the schoolhouse at last. Halfway to the tombstone, we stumbled over a body. It was Sam, still alive but gasping for breath.

"They done come back. Colonel and his lady. I'se gwine home now, case the Colonel won't call fer me no more."

Hand on wrist, I look at the white face of the man holding the lantern.

"He is dead!" I whispered.

"We have to find Belle," he cried, and went toward the grave.

There we found her sleeping, one hand on the stone, at rest.

Sitting on the ground he held her in his arms, crying.

I took the lantern and examined the clay earth outside the fence. Hoofprints of two shod horses, side by side.

"She ran up here to tease you, Doctor. It was too much for her heart. She slashed you across the face in play, and then ran here, thinking you would follow her. That explains everything, doesn't it, Doctor?"

"It should," I said gently, trying to unlock his arms from the lovely thing he held. "It should, but the Colonel will ride no more."



## CELEBRITIES I'VE MET

by Mortimer Weisinger

Donald Wandrei, who frankly considers his stories "just so much junk" from an artistic viewpoint.

Nathan Schachner, who admits that he is a slow writer at best, one thousand words each night being his maximum output.

David Lasser, who profoundly apologized to the old Scienceers one night for concealing the fact that Gawain Edwards was only a pen name.

A perfunctory search through that register of eminent Americans, "Who's Who," reveals the following science fiction celebrities as listed:

Edgar Rice Burroughs, J. U. Guiesy, Stanton A. Coblentz, George Allan England, Dr. T. O'Connor Sloane, Hugo Gernsback, Edwin Balmer, William MacHarg, T. S. Stribling, J. S. Haldane, A. Hyatt Verrill, Fred MacIsaac, Ellis Parker Butler, Eric Temple Bell.

What other fiction field can boast as many distinguished contributors?

Supernatural Horror in Literature  
(continued from page 171)

read and eventually dramatised, but its late date in the evolution of the Gothic tale deprived it of the tumultuous popularity of "Udolpho" and "The Monk."

(Next month Mr. Lovecraft takes up "The Aftermath of Gothic Fiction.")

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