"AT&T's down 3 points again -"
Mirage
Volume One
Winter, 1963-64
JACK L. CHALKER, Editor & Publisher

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A Weltschmerz Publication
NOTICE TO MEMBERS OF SAPS
(this message is only on the 42 SAPScopies)

Dear fellow SAPS:

This is MIRAGE, Volume One, Number Six, and also MIRAGE, SAPSzine #1. Actually, I hadn't planned to circulate this venerable publication to members as my mailing requirements, but it's suddenly becoming clearer and clearer that I can not, what with 2 termpapers & a Lovecraft bibliography for Arkham House due by 12/31, get a preplanned SAPSzine out. And, while running the cover you see here (and it was a bitch to run!), I decided that I'd take 42 of the blue-cover copies, write an introductory message, and make MIRAGE a SAPSzine. Let's say that you'll not see a MIRAGE every mailing -- primarily because material of MIR's quality is damnably hard to find -- but only that every MIRAGE from herein will be a SAPSzine. Since MIRAGE is also a 210c copy 'zine for a general subscribing public, and in order to get a more personal outlook, I will put with future MIRAGE's a section known affectionately as IBEX -- but only the SAPScopies will contain it; the section will be only 42 copies. The other, outside readers may consider themselves Culturally Deprived. When a mailing arrives and no MIRAGE is imminent (which will be quite often) IBEX will be published as the SAPSzine itself.

To satisfy OE Felz, MIRAGE #6 is not being mailed out to subscribers until January 16 -- SAPS will get MIRAGE first. The only two copies being sent out before that time are the Copyright Office ones. Does this qualify MIR6 as a whole for credit, Bruce? It'd better -- it would be a letdown to be thrown out after this.

I know some of you; others are brand new. Bob Lichtman used to receive MIRAGE, as did Ruth Berman, Karen Anderson, Don Fitch, Gordon Eklund, Norm Metcalfe...Walter Breen, John Berry (this is the little crudzine you wrote for back in 1960 as CENTAUR, John), Dick Eney, Lenny Kaye, Al J. Lewis Jr., Ed Meshys, and a couple waiting-listers receive it regularly still. I hope all of you enjoy it -- particularly those to whom it's a New Thing.

As a short word of Introduction in this small IBEXpage, I am Jack L. Chalker, a student at Towson College here in Maryland. Fannish-wise I've published THE NEW H.P. LOVECRAFT BIBLIOGRAPHY, Doc Keller's A FIGMENT OF A DREAM, and IN MEMORIAM: CLARE ASHTON SMITH, as well as MIR. I've attended all Phillycons since '61, Lunscons '62 & '63, Disclove '62, Chicon III, and Discon. My chances of getting to the Pacificon are very slim -- but there is hope that I may see some of you there.

I have a reputation for being a Dirty Sercon and a Reactionary to boot, the former being true as far as publications go and the latter stemming from a feud sparked in MIR3 to get publicity that really mushroomed. The editorial this time is designed to provoke commentary but NOT to start a fandango!

So, this is MIRAGE, entered for your consideration in the 66th SAPS mailing. Hope you enjoy it and will comment.

Jack Chalker.
I have never felt too inclined towards fanatics in any field. A few months back, however, I encountered a type of queer creature in a sort of reverse role, and it has inspired me to make some comments on the unusual state of affairs existing in religious -- and non-religious -- quarters today. This is not an essay for or against any belief; it is simply a reflection of certain beliefs of my own on an unusual social stigmatism.

At the time the initial incident occurred, I was employed at a nearby drug store. On certain nights, two girls I knew used to come in when they got off from work. One was a fan; she was a college student, and then an agnostic as far as religion went. The other, whom I knew but slightly, was not a fan, but like the other was also a college student. She was and is also a fanatical atheist of Madalyn Murray's "militant" sort.

Since I was not busy at the time, I proceeded to engage in a favorite hobby -- that of people-baiting. I noted the books that the 'atheist was carrying around -- THE ATHEIST'S MANIFESTO, WHY I QUIT THE MINISTRY TO BECOME AN ATHEIST, etc., all ripe pieces of malcontented drivel (and to nip comments in the 'bud', I have read them and others like them). She had, of course, been reading sensationalistic, emotion-provoking, material rather than intelligent works by rational people.

Finally, after a lengthy and rapid exchange of verbiage, I noticed that several other people had gathered to hear the discussion. At just about this time I felt I had my victim backed into a verbal corner, and I sprang the Question, the one which usually causes a hasty retreat on the part of the victim with some loss of face. I received a surprise. The basic Question, and the answer I received, follow:

Q: If I and my co-believers (and what a horridly inclusive term that is!) respect your right to Disbelieve, why can't you -- and the atheist movements in general -- respect MY right to believe, instead of utilizing ridicule and persecutive methods?

A. "Because we're RIGHT! I know we're right. I feel it emotionally, intellectually. I know. Because we're RIGHT!"

Because we're right. Isn't that the most childish piece of emotional idiocy ever given for an answer? Yet adults use it continually to justify idiocy. Hitler set out to conquer the world and spread Fascism, "Because we're Right!" Communism pursues the tyranny of man today "Because we're Right!" Moslems at one time took up the sword and forced their faith upon untold millions in a sea of blood "Because we're Right!" Kings ruled their thrones, dominated empires, commanded whole armies to do their bidding,
-- and men followed them, men obeyed their slightest whim. "Because we're Right!"
Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, with all their untold millions
of adherents, propagate and uphold their religion "Because we're Right!" Ask a believer
in any religion, say, a Hindu of Calcutta or a Hebrew in Israel, and he'll tell you that
His religion is the only true religion, that all others are false and adherents to them
heathen infidels, that his is Right, that he knows it is, spiritually, emotionally, and
realistically, beyond the shadow of a single doubt. His is the True Religion "Because
we're Right!"

"Because we're Right!" How often has this sterling bit of unreasonable thinking
been used to justify any means, any ends? How often have those three words meant sub-
jugation of the masses, whether the cause proved right or wrong in itself? It is an
emotional reason, not a thinking reason, used to rationalize anything if no other sol-
ution exists. When rational thinking fails, it is "BECAUSE WE'RE RIGHT!" that the idea,
the system, the ideology yet exists. It is the fanatic's basic reason for existence....
For the fanatic is not a rational creature.

Just what is a fanatic? He is someone who has had some personal experience which
has created a psychological block; a narrow-minded, big-mouthed person who has allowed
one Cause to take precedence over everything, over his daily life, and who can not --
indeed, is psychologically incapable of -- seeing any other Cause. He thinks with his
emotions; rational thought to such a blinded one becomes synonymous with heresy. And
heresy must not happen.

The fanatic is most open and is probably most prevalent in religious matters. This
is natural, since religion itself is primarily an emotional rather than a physical insti-
tution, and thus attracts the more emotional -- and hence, neofanatical -- types of
people as well as the "norm."

It is not the purpose here to take one side against another. This essay is intended
not to tear down beliefs, but to start someone thinking. It is against fanaticism, and
thus, since fanaticism is prevalent in religion, we will examine the three basic sides in
the religious full-circle and see what makes their adherents tick. The following are ex-
tremes; if we didn't hit you this time it is simply because your particular belief is
irrelevant to the point. Let's first try:

EXTREMIST ATHEISM

The fanatical atheist, oddly enough, usually begins as a disciple of a ritualistic,
old, established church. He is indoctrinated into it, and by the time the truly impres-
ssionable age rolls around (13-18) is thoroughly emmersed in doctrine and pseudodoctrine,
thoughly convinced that his church is the True Church, and is the typification of all
religion. And then something happens.

Perhaps the child is strongly attached to both parents, and then suddenly the par-
ents separate or divorce. Perhaps the home life is very far from ideal; perhaps the pioul-
ness of someone he looked up to is suddenly in doubt. In most cases, it is either divorce
or the death of a parent or very close and dearly loved relative. It may be a combination
of any or all of these factors, or others left unmentioned, but once the child experiences
the shock, the house of cards begins to crumble about him.

The first question is, "Why would God allow this to happen?" A rational person will
soon see why, but this is not a rational person. The second question, then, is "Is there
a God or not? A merciful God would never allow this!" The doubt is raised, nurtured, and
matures in an atmosphere of fear. The subject is at this point wide open for environmen-
tal influences. First, justification is attempted through the priest, or rabbi, or what-
ever, and this is disappointing -- the advice is generally rational, but it seems harsh,
even cruel, to the listener for it's not what he wants to hear. The subject soon dis-
covers that there are no pat answers, no absolutes. Seemingly, the council of the Church
(whose infallibility has been drilled into the seeking one) has failed. Might not there have been other failures? Prayer brings no miracles, no immediate revelations, no final solution (is someone really listening?). And then, quite incredibly, a veil is lifted, and the seeker sees the Church as a paganistic institution, usurping the rights it has and balking the poor people through ritualistic nonsense. The person backs off; is emotionally shattered, is revolted. What to do? Indoctrinated heavily almost from birth, the seeker has been taught that his erstwhile church is the True Church, the one Church of them all. In his mind he typifies all churches, all religions, using his "revealed" impressions of his own church as a guide. His church, in his mind, is representative of ALL religion. This is an example of indoctrinational backfiring, and it can but lead down one path. The seeker is by nature an emotional extremist, and MUST, by necessity, have a shoulder to cry upon. The despair and hate which resulted from the traumatic experience beginning the chain must be struck back, but now the object of attack turns from the experience to the church itself. There seems to be but one avenue open, and he takes it. The avenue is militant atheism. Here, at last, is a God of sorts. The God is No-God, which is satisfying since it is an emotional backslap at the church he has left. It holds itself up to worship, and dangles before him new phrases to bable and repeat, such wondrous items as, "HAVE YOU OUTGROWN GODS, SAVIORS, AND SUPERNATURALISM?" "ARE YOU A FREE MAN?" "SCIENCE IS SUPREME. ALL THINGS CAN OR WILL BE DONE BY SCIENCE." "I AM BROAD MINDED; I AM NOT HALFWHELD LIKE THE POOR RELIGIOUS FOOLS. I AM A FREETHINKER!" Sure, free to think exactly what the dogma tells him to think. Still, here is something that seems to explain it all away! Here are all the whys and wherefores, carefully laid out in neat little rows for the eye to see! Surely THIS is the True Answer! See... they base their philosophy on rational thought, on scientific foundations. And into the wondrous world of atheism skips the joyous subject.

UP GO THE MENTAL BLOCKS! This is the only True Way! No other alternative exists, it seems, and certainly here is an answer, however ill-defined. But believe: believe with all your heart, with all your mind. Throw yourself into the ideology, become very emotionally entangled. And, above all, set up those mental blocks and this overlook the bad things, the idiocies and the errors, all of the holes in theory and doctrine. Overlook the point that you haven't changed a single bit! You are now a good little fanatic. Why? Because if he is not, then sooner or later he will start thinking on a rational plane, quit deluding himself, and realize that this system, too, is an abysmal failure. But it must not fail! Once bitten, twice burned; even the fool doesn't go near the fire the second time without precautions. And there is No Place Else to Go.

FOR HE HAS ENTERED A SOCIAL STRUCTURE VERY ALIKE A CHURCH, WITH ITS OWN VERY STRICT LAWS AND TABOOS, ITS INFALLIBLE DOCTRINES AND TECHNIQUES! HE HAS NOT TRADED GOD FOR NOTHING AT ALL, BUT SIMPLY TRADED GOD FOR NO-GOD, AND THEN MADE NO-GOD THE EXACT SAME THING!

He throws himself into his work with a missionary zeal. He reads only emotionally trash written to appease the new god; he must not allow himself to be Tempted by religious matter! He is attracted particularly to other converts -- particularly idolizing ministerial converts -- and works hard and diligently to propagate his faith. (We must interject here that the term "convert" as applied to obtaining religious persons and religiously converting them to militant atheism, was first used in that connotation (a religious one) by Kadalyen Murray, and is used frequently in board recommendations of Other Americans, Inc.). He must overlook such men as Bishop Pike, who deserted the militant atheist camp to become a moderate and brilliant religious leader, and brand such men heretics and idiots. Answer everything with a counter; never allow yourself to be unguarded. And if you're in a corner, there is always "Because we're RIGHT!" And now the subject is at the point at which direct, concrete evidence, if possible, would be dismissed as trickery and lies. You are now one of the hard core of malcontents who have reversed the flow and found their Master. Now to work -- irritate, fight, all who do not believe exactly as you (i.e. freethinker?) You've a Principle now! And, since
reason can not be used in a verbal, non-legal fight, use the only weapon left — the one weapon which the religious advocates are too decent to use...general ridicule and insult in public.

Thus is the fanatical atheist made. Yet there are other extremes. We have seen the Radical Left; let’s now see the Radical Right, which is, of course:

EXTREME DOGMATIC RELIGIONISM

We’ve all seen the religious extremist. He comes in two sizes — the zealous pseudointellectual, and the itinerant, untrained Fundamentalist. The first type is an ordained minister, but with a difference. He has had some sort of revelation; he’s had a spark. He is the believer who has had quite the same indoctrination as the extreme atheist, and he, too, has seen the holes in his church through personal crisis. But he didn’t rebel against the church; instead, he called upon a combination of emotional indoctrination and literal reality, rationalized the whole mess, and somehow wound up with a divine revelation. Certainly there are holes -- something has gone amiss. Now he has been shown that what has gone amiss, and it is obviously his divine, ordained-by-God, duty to fill the gaps and correct mistakes! (After all, the Revelation was shown to him!)

Thus, the same sort of process, with the basic difference in each of us which creates a separate and distinct personality, which turned the atheistic away, has created a different sort of monster entirely. The new religionist has filled in the gaps with false, emotional rationalizations of non-reasonable subjects, and has set out to correct. He is fond of quoting the Bible at any occasion (out of context, naturally) and is seemingly possessed of the largest and loudest pair of lungs in the world. Industriously he has spent six years of study, and has become a minister. He then either starts his own sect or runs his church in a devotional pattern, which he devotes to be the correct way of curing the church’s ills. He cannot be wrong, for was he not chosen by God? Zealously, piously, he whips up an emotional fervor, and, in the end, turns out to be doing, slightly different but with the same purpose, exactly what the fanatical atheist is doing, and the mental block is just as solid. If God Himself were to come down and admonish the fanatical preacher for his deeds, the preacher would scream at Him, "GET THE AWAY, TEMPTER, SATAN!" and turn his back upon the God he professes to serve and go along his merry way.

The other type of religious fanatic is an interesting soul. He is not an ordained minister, and is ordinarily uneducated. He spends his time much the same as the above-mentioned zealot, battling with same for the title of Biggest Lungs, but for a different reason. He is compensating for his own inadequacies; he knows he’s generally below the norm, and so he spends his time (in the name of God, of course) trying to rule people, show himself to be superior, covering up his own needs and deficiencies by getting wound up in a 100% emotional manner.

So, there are the two sides of religion we usually see, and the predominant atheist side of the coin. Not very encouraging, you say? It doesn’t seem to be, but there’s a Center movement, too. But is there a solution there? Let’s look at

AGNOSTICISM

He, too, comes in different shapes and sizes. He can be a True Agnostic, a Deist, or a member of an "intellectual" splinter branch of the Unitarians. The Unitarians are a whole are as fascinating a bunch of contradiction as can be imagined. The Unitarian church was founded in Calvinist times by a Spaniard named Servetus, a Protestant reformer but a devout Christian. He hated Calvin, but like an idiot tried to spread his Christian Reform (Unitarian) movement into Geneva in person and Calvin burned him at the stake. The sect flourished, but somewhere along the line the scholars corrupted the writings of the founder, Servetus, alarmed at the spread of atheism during the Reformation, particularly among peasants and itinerant workers, attempted to bring the relationship between Christ and the lower class much closer, by promoting the belief
that in the Beginning there was only God the Father; the Son was born and came into being first here, on Earth. It gave Christ a more human look. But scholars claimed that Christ was only a Prophet; this was then reduced to Man. The Old Testament alone was and is used in the church, and pretty soon it was advertised as a hovel for the intellectual wherein religion would not interfere with the church as a social institution. It became, then, as it is in many parts of the world today, a Gentile, non-ritualistic, non-dogmatic form of Judaism in which God wasn't even necessary. In other words, it has come to function much as a social haven for agnostics and a-theists with over-inflated egos (bless their little intellects!). But for the few outposts of true Unitarianism left, it has ceased to be a religious or non-religious institution entirely.

AGNOSTICISM. Agnosticism itself is an extremely inoffensive philosophy; it comes admirably under the term "fence-straddling." Imagine a great long fence. On one side, the left side, are all of the atheists. On the right side are all of the religionists. And there, perched precariously on top of that fence, striving for balance but unable to perfectly obtain either balance or to fall, are the agnostics. The agnostic philosophy of religion is defined in three words -- "I don't know." The very word "agnostic" is derived from the Latin "agnosticus" which means "undecided." In practice, "I don't know" is a philosophy both healthy and poor. It seems to settle all problems, but actually simply evades the questions. It is emotionally settling, yet it accomplishes nothing. The strict agnostic tends towards being an introvert in personality, usually of some good intelligence but without the ability to use it. In his personal life he lives with a great number of needless fears, and broods over them. He is unable to make snap decisions. It is a healthy philosophy only in that it means that one is searching for an answer. When the agnostic stops searching, it is a decaying, corrupting existence. For the agnostic must search, must investigate, or, all too often, "I don't know" becomes the stagnant "I don't care." When the agnostic ceases to care, he puts himself aloft. He is incapable of sound philosophy, and begins a mental decay. He is incapable of believing in anything not demonstrable before his very eyes; he is untrustful, non-agressive or agressive to no end, obsessed with fear of daily life. To compensate for this fear, and deny it to himself, he joins a "lunatic fringe," and becomes the anarchist of the mind. "I don't know" means healthy, intelligent thought -- a search for true meanings and answers. "I don't care" means only stagnacy.

There are a few agnostics who have managed to find a precarious balance between the fence and one side. If they're balanced to the left, they're the fringe actually mislabeled "freethinker." God was impersonal. He created the world. O.K. But then he either withdrew entirely; or somehow ceased to exist -- probably "He" was just natural forces anyway. The atheist will cry "GOD NEVER EXISTED!" The "Freethinker," (sic), will cry "GOD IS DEAD!"

To the Right are the Deists. Like the Freethinker, it is a sect of lunatic fringe people which grew out of the Enlightenment (itself somewhat of a lunatic fringe). The god of Enlightenment thinkers was Isaac Newton, who, among other things, is probably one of the greatest advocates and practitioners of astrology who ever lived. Deism, in essence, recognizes that God might exist -- and while it doesn't actually say that He does, it admits that probability is in favor of His existence. But they reject a personal God. They see that (providing God exists) He created the universe, and man, and (a 50-50 possibility the Deists like to lean towards) an afterlife. But after creation, God withdrew. You live the best moral life you can on earth, work for your fellow man, and, when you're dead, you're judged and sent to someplace. This religious philosophy is supposedly based upon Reason, but the steps to this Reason seem to have been misplaced in the 150 years since the Enlightenment created the sect.

The Freethinker has mental blocks, but could possibly be swayed. The Deist is the same, but whereas the Freethinker is definitely atheistic in spirit, the Deist can only go along with the non-religious Humanistic societies. They've bent a little, but they
are still on the road to mental and philosophical stagnation, since they are both obviously -- and historically -- artificially created beliefs by an intellectual grouping of brilliant but erratic Enlightenment thinkers.

This is surely a gloomy portrait! Is there an answer? There might be. I believe that there is. Has anyone ever counted the number and variations of beliefs on the socio-religious scale? Has it occurred to these people that the Church in which they were indoctrinated is not the only one? That all beliefs have holes? The problem is not that the holes are in every form of pro or anti-religious belief, but in recognizing those holes without going emotionally berserk! And without having to perch precariously on a fence and accomplish nothing at all for yourself or for others.

"The Greatest Amount of Good for the Greatest Number of People!"

So advocated Benthan and Mill, and so should we realize that this is the solution. Yet there is no single belief or ideology which will provide us with the means to that ideal. We are individuals. If we don't all like the same foods, the same people, the same everything -- then why should we all be expected to have the same belief and be happy? We must throw away our preconceived and indoctrinated notions of factions within the socio-religious framework, and treat the field as a whole. Obviously, no side has all the answers. How could it? Cultures, ways and modes of thought, even racial characteristics tend to make the needs of each individual different from his neighbor. But look at the entire fabric, the whole, from Radical Left to Radical Right. No single entity on that long line has all the answers, but each has something significant to offer! It is not one single sect or belief that will serve the greater number best and you as an individual, but the entire framework, from one end to the other. It's ONE, don't you see? It's ONE! Each person must seek -- not emotionally, but rationally, free from indoctrination and shock, recognizing his or her own limitations and not trying to find compensatory thoughts. Examine the number line at the end of this essay. On it, the three basic beliefs covered herein are shown and labeled -- but LO! What are all of those countless little lines? They are the variations, the multitudes of moderate groups -- countless numbers of them, each very different, and on BOTH sides of the fence. One of them will have something to offer you, something which will give you, as an individual, the greater good, and will also allow you to exist in a philosophical condition whereby you are contributing to the GREATER GOOD of the greater number. On one of those dots, also, you might learn to respect the Fabric as a whole, and learn respect for the other fellow's own beliefs. Take a good look at yourself. Are you getting the most out of your personal philosophy? Are you also CONTRIBUTING toward the greater good. No fooling yourself, now. Are you? Seek, then, there are countless possibilities awaiting. Seek and don't give up. One of those areas voices a line very appropriate -- "Seek, and ye shall find."

But recognize that the Fabric is a whole; that your needs are not necessarily the needs and conditions of others; that the greatest good for the greatest number is not one dot on that line, BUT THE ENTIRE LINE. You take aspirin to clear a headache. Someone else may be allergic to aspirin. Will you force aspirin upon that allergic person? YOUR NEEDS ARE NOT THE NEEDS OF OTHERS. Remember that, and search. Find your place on the number line, and DON'T give up. Don't stop caring, and for all that's good and holy don't stop and fall into the greatest of all emotional traps. When asked why, know. Beware! Don't ever be snared by "Because we're RIGHT!"

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SEABURY QUINN (1889—) actually needs no introduction to those of you who read MIRAGE -- he is, as Bill Evans so aptly put when introducing Quinn at the 21st World Science Fiction Convention, the "Grand Old Man of Fantasy." Mr. Quinn could well be the most prolific writer in the genre. His appearances in print go back to the fabled THRILL BOOK, and his supernatural detective series featuring sleuth Jules deGrandin has no less than 104 stories! Arkham House plans to publish the best of these shortly. If one looks at a bibliography of WEIRD TALES -- any year -- he will be amazed to find Seabury Quinn in almost every one -- beginning with Volume One, Number One! His book, ROADS, published by Arkham House in 1948, is one of the most popular stories WEIRD TALES ever published, being a tale of Saint Nicholas -- actually Claus the Northern Barbarian -- based on old German legends. Quinn is known for his polished style, his ability to write a superb and memorable weird without resorting to Gothic style and tricks. He is a master craftsman, responsible in good measure for the evolution of the weird tale into 20th century form. His last appearance was in the Avon anthology FRIGHT, in good company with E.T.A. Hoffman, J. Sheridan LeFanu, and H.P. Lovecraft (Avon,1963 #G1178,50¢). Here is Quinn at his most representative level, demonstrating in full the unusual talent of a man who could write of the weird with an astonishing prolificness, and, even more astonishing, write well every single time. The following tale of demonology by this Master is new; never before published. We present it to you to evoke memories of things past, and to demonstrate the talent that is Quinn.....JLC

MASTER NICHOLAS

by Seabury Quinn
THERE ARE CERTAIN CEREMONIAL CALLS TO BE MADE EACH TIME I GO TO NEW YORK. No trip, of course, would be complete without Radio City and a tour of window-washing down Fifth Avenue, nor could I call it a successful jaunt if I neglected to imbibe at least one drink at the old bar in Irving Place whence William Sydney Porter, otherwise O. Henry, viewed the sidewalks of Manhattan through an amiable alcoholic haze. But most of all I love to browse along Fourth Avenue from Eighth to Fourteenth street,

"Where antique books are ranged on shelves
As dark and dusty as themselves,"

and where the trash and lumber of one man may become the prized treasure of another.

It was on my latest visit to Bagdad on the Hudson I fouled what appeared to be an old ledger lying dust-strewn and unnoticed on the 3 for 25¢ stand before a little shop in Astor Place. It was bound in scuffing calfskin, fastened with a brass hasp-and-knob, and warped and spotted from exposure to the weather. I unclasped its fastening with care lest its worn back give way altogether and saw inscribed upon its flyleaf in fading logwood ink:

Eliab Stande-Firm-\&-Witnæf-ye-Salvation
Motherfolke hyf journall

I was about to put the volume back when an entry dated 12h Sep. 1676 caught my eye. Three minutes later the "journal" and a dog-eared copy of Elsie Dinsmore were mine, together with a volume of the Rev. Silas Higginbotham's Gems of Devotional Poetry -- all for twenty-five cents, plus one cent city sales tax.

He must have been a very little man, this Eliab of the big name, and probably a victim of what our forbears knew as "the white fever" and we call poliomyelitis, for several times he mentions his small stature and once or twice refers to his "wythered hande."

It was not until the latter part of 1676, however, that the diary begins recording a series of events which might have been the basis of narrative poems by Longfellow or Whitfield. Stripped of antique orthography and the minute chronicle of doings and happenings to his neighbors, the "journal" of Eliab et cetera Mothersole recounts:

12h Aug. 1676 --- This day came Capt. Winterset and several of his company upon their way to Plymouth town with the head of King Phillip of the Wampanoags who was run to earth and kilt like any fox by Mount Hope in Providence Plantations. The Wampanoags, they say, are well-nigh wiped out and those who still survive are hunted through the woods like beasts feræ naturæ. Yet in the moment of full gratefulness for our deliverance from the savages I am greatly troubled in my heart, for this day week I did see Mistress Patience Fell, the promised wife of my brother Abiel, in sprightly conversation with Master Oliver Outbourne, whose father rides out in a coach and four.

They made a goodly couple these two, he with his dark hair, clear dark skin, and laughing black eyes, she with a beauty scarcely of this world, tall, lovely, tender to regard. Ah, Mistress Patience, had I been tall and strongly made instead of having but a puny stature and a withered hand, I had not stood aside and let my brother claim thee. But as it is I worship thee at distance and bide the time when thou shalt be my sister, sith more to me thou never canst be.
And who is he, this richling upstart who dares prate with thee while Brother Abiel is away at the wars? He is but a ninny, unskilled alike with sword or quill, fit only to stand in a stall and cry "What d'ye lack?" at passers-by at fair time. Were it not for his father's gold I trow ye'd give him not a second look for all his pretty face.

Yet like calleth to like. The men love pretty women, the women dote on pretty men, and Abiel my brother though stalwart and most worthy hath little manly beauty. Besides, the years crowd on him, for his next birthday is his thirtieth, and youth and age are not fit mates for one another. If Brother Abiel comes not soon from the wars I fear he'll find his birdling in another's cage.

22d Dec. 1676 --- In my breast resounds an aching void where once there was a heart, for it is bruited round that Mistress Patience Fell will marry Oliver Outbourne. O Abiel my brother, why dalliest thou in the wildwood hunting feathered savages while the fox is in thy vineyard; why, O shallow-hearted woman, dost thou set thy plighted word at naught and take a nincompoop to husband?

23d May, 1677 --- Today I bespeak Mistress Patience in the High Street. "How now, Mistress," I asked, "will thou truly set aside thy pledged word to my brother and intermarry with this ninny? 'Tis true Abiel is a trifle old and nothing handsome, but he hath one of the best shops in Duncannon, and loveth thee right well besides. What hath this sany that my brother lacketh?"

Whereat she tossed her fair head saucily and looked me in the eye. "And what is it to thee whom I should marry, Master Eliah?" says she. "Master Outbourne hath much wealth, and she who weddeth him will go clad in silks and satins and have servants to attend her. Besides that he is young and favorose."

"Peace, woman!" I rebuked. "Do baubles such as these outweigh true worth? Also, thou hast given thy pledge to my brother."

Now, hearing this she laughed a laugh as musical as water-glasses played on by a cunning hand and tossed her head again. "Yea, such things far outweigh that which thou callest worth, good Master Eliah," saith she right pertly. "And as for my pledged word, a promise of betrothal is no marriage, and a woman hath the right to change her mind." With which she left me staring like a natural in the midst of the High Street.

25th Jul. 1677 --- This day came Brother Abiel from the wars, looking mighty fine and soldierlike in his bright body armor and steel cap, his boots of Spanish leather, and his great sword clanking at his heels. First of all he goeth to the shop to see how Goodman Dillet and the 'prentices had managed in his absence, then to my chambers for a snack of cold roast mutton and a stoup of small beer. "And how fares it with my beauteous bride-to-be?" he asketh with his eyes above the tankard's rim and beer-foam on his mouth. "Dost she comport herself as one should who will wed the keeper of the finest shop in all the town?"

It was not till he had drank three more pint-cups of the brew that I made bold to tell him how things stood, and at the hearing he went livid as a dead corpse hanged on Gallows Hill. "And thou hast suffered this?" he bellowed in so wild a tone that I was fain to creep beneath my table for safety. "By Lucifer his horns, I have a mind to spit thee like a fowl on this sword of mine! As for that coxcomb Oliver, may Satan broil me on a grid if I do not cut out his heart and feed it to that jill-flirt woman bit by tiny but --"

"Would not that be a silly thing to do, friend?" asked a soft, insinuating voice, and at its sound we both turned toward my outer chamber door, which had been left a little open because of the heat.
The one who stood upon my threshold was the strangest figure ever I did see.
He was a small man, scarcely higher than I, but something in his mien made him seem big, almost a giant. His skin was tanned a copper hue by sun and wind, belike by sea as well, for there was that about him that bespoke the sea, and though his eyes were smiling; cruelty lurked in their depths. A small black mustache edged his upper lip, and on his chin was a tuft of whisker narrow as a woman's finger. For the rest he wore his hair at shoulder length and had a fine green coat fringed with gold lace, a ruffled shirt of fine linen with falls of lace at throat and wrists, and claret-colored breeches tucked in boots of yellow Moorish leather. Across one shoulder swung a baldric of red silk and from it hung a jewel-hilted rapier.

"I ask your pardons," he said as he doffed his wide hat with a flourish, "but I was passing by and heard some talk of murder, and as I have much interest in such things and am vastly curious by nature, I made bold to stop and -- may I come in?" He smiled most pleasantly at me.

"Aye, man, come in; stand not there grinning like a cat before a dish o' cream!" bade Brother Abiel, but still the stranger lingered on my doorstep.

"These be your chambers, ben't they, sir?" he asked me, "I thought I saw your lawyer's shingle at the door."

"Yea, they are mine," I answered. "Pray enter."

"I thank thee in all courtesy," he said, stepping across the sill. "One in my position cannot be too careful in such matters."

"And who in Satan's soul name art thou, and what concern is it of thine if I should choose to slit a jackanapes's gullet?" asked Brother Abiel.

"Oh, none at all," the stranger laughed a laugh that somehow sounded like the soughing of the wind among the pines in winter. "If you elect to dangle from a noose on Gallows Hill, and so lose life and love at once, 'twas no concern of mine." He took a jeweled snuff-box from his pocket and pinched a mite of maccaboy 'twixt thumb and finger, then put it to his nose most daintily. "I'd offer you a sniff," he told me. "But I fear 'twould prove a little over-warm for thee." And verily the stuff seemed fiery, for as he sniffed it up his nostrils I could swear I saw a little flash of flame come from them, and in a moment came a little puff of smoke, as though he drew on a tobacco pipe.

"A pox on thee and thy razzles!" swore Brother Abiel. "Get thee gone and leave us to our discourse, sirrah!"

"And if I do not choose to leave?" the stranger asked with such a smile as one might give a nattering child.

"'By, then, I'll take the flat o' my blade off thy hindside!" bellowed Brother Abiel, and half drew his great-sword from its sheath.

But swift as he was to unloose his steel the stranger was still handier, and whipped his rapier out as it had been a flash of lightning darting from a cloud. "Put up thy brand, great dotterel," he bade as he pressed home his spadroon's tip against my brother's throat.
"Fore heaven," swear Abiel as he clanged his blade back in its tube, "I think the devil's in thy hand!"

"That may well be," the other agreed with a light tittering laugh, "and in the rest o' me as well. But we were talking of another matter. It seems that thou wouldst wed the lady?"

"I would in very truth," my brother answereth. "There is nothing in the world that I desire so much."

The stranger drummed against his lips with the fingers of one hand. "And what price wouldst thou pay for her?"

Abiel raised his knotted fists and tossed his head back as in prayer. "As heaven and hell shall judge me," he cried wildly, "I'd give the soul out of my body to wed her!"

"Thy sure, that is a reasonable enough price," the stranger smiled like one who comes upon a bargain at a tradesman's. "Thou wouldst not quibble over payment?"

My brother thrust his face forward until his knotty nose almost met the other's lean beak. "If Satan would but grant my wedding to this woman he might take my soul and welcome!" he snarled like a teasled dog.

The stranger laughed again and made a leg to each of us in turn. "I am known as Master Nicholas by some," he told us, "and I will see thee at thy wedding to fair Mistress Patience Fell, brave Captain Abiel." With which he turned upon his heel and left us gawking as we had seen a peacock, ape or other marvel, for neither of us had pronounced my brother's name nor that of Mistress Patience in his hearing, yet he had called them by their proper styles. Moreover, he was solid as a fence-post when he stepped across my threshold, yet in the twinkling of an eye he disappeared as he walked through the door, and where a man had stood was nothing but the dapple of the sunshine on the door-stone and two or three bluebottles buzzing in the heat.

3d Aug. 1677 -- Woe me, for I have slain a man. The brand of Cain is on my brow, and though the crowner's quest acquits me of the murther, my conscience troubleth me greatly.

It was about two of the clock when I was on my way to Goodwife Matthew's for a cast of bread that evil fortune threw young Master Oliver Outbourne in my path. As Holy Scripture saith, wine is a mocker and strong drink regeth, and Oliver had taken something more than small beer with his dinner, for his face was flushed and his eyes glowing when he met me in the High Street. "Good morrow, Master Pettifogger," quoth he. "I've heard thou liest not the idea of my wedding to sweet Patience, and sayest I'm no better than a fox in the vineyard; that thou wilt pummel me on sight, and other suchlike things."

"Why, then, 'tis partly truth and partly lies they've told thee," I answered. "That thou or any man should seduce Mistress Patience from her promise to my brother seems little less than scandalous to me, but he who says I uttered threats against thee lies. I am a lawyer and a man of peace. Besides, thou art of heavier frame than I, and mauger my desire I am powerless to do thee hurt."

"Wherewith I made to pass him. But he would not have it so. "Thou art a misbegotten liar and a craven coward to boot," he told me as he stood himself in my way. "Thy great oaf of a brother I cannot trounce, but thee I can and will, and may the devil take me by the hand and bid me welcome to his house if I do not do it here and now." And as he drew his sword and struck me smartly on the cheek with its flat.

Now during these days of alarm I wear a cutlass at my thigh, for Providence alone knoweth what moment we shall have to fight for life against savages, so when I felt the sting of steel upon my cheek I drew my blade and stood at guard, and seeing this mine adversary laughed in triumph and made at me.

But as he beat my brand aside and aimed a thrust at my bosom he stumbled in the road so that he fell against my awkwardly advanced point and was thrust through the throat.
His sword fell to the dust and up his empty hands went to the sky, his fingers clutching at the air. He made a gurgling in his throat like water flowing through a covered runnel, then the stiffness went from his legs and he fell flat in the road while blood gushed from his mouth in a red spate. Then he was dead.

Perhaps it had gone hard with me at crown's quest had it not been that Mistress Patience was upon her way to Goodwife Jenkins' for a loan of leaven for her baking, and chanced to witness our encounter. Our words she had not heard, but she saw Oliver take out his sword and smite me in the face therewith, and on her testimony that I had not bared my blade until attacked I was acquitted of a charge of murther.

As I left the inquisition Mistress Patience looked on me with such a look as I had never seen in woman's eyes before, and, "Eliab," saith she, what time her cheek and throat were stained a wild rose color with the mounting blood, "I had not thought them had it in thee." Then she was gone.

Now one thing greatly troubles me, nay, two. Imprimis: Meseems that Oliver did not entirely fall upon my point by chance, for in the instant that he stumbled in the road it was as if there were three shadows in the bright sunshine, mine own, Oliver's, and another's, and that other stood at his shoulder as if to push him from the back and make him lose his stance and fall upon my steel. Yet there were only two of us there present, of that I can avouch. Secundus: As Oliver ceased struggling and lay quiet in the High Street I thought I caught the shadow of two forms at some small distance, and the first of these was shaped like Oliver Outbourne who lay dead in the dust before me, while with him, drawing him along as one might lead a balky child, meseemed I saw the shade of Master Nicholas.

29th Sep. 1677 -- Today a little before sundown went my brother Abiel and I to meet with Mistress Patience and her mother Dame Deborah at the manse. And presently their vows were made and Parson Kawsell lectured them at length, bidding Patience be submissive to her wedded lord and master, and Abiel to love and cherish her as the weaker vessel. And afterwards we went out into the cool of the evening.

"Come, wife," commanded Brother Abiel. "My house is swept and garnished for thee, and I have waited long to bear thee o'er its threshold."

"Nay, be not so impatient, Son Abiel," chid Dame Deborah gently. "They bed and board will keep a little longer, and I have made brave preparations for a feast. The beer is brewed, the cider mulled, the pig and turkeys roasting on their spits, and soon the neighbors gather to break bread with us."

"Then let them break their bread without our company," saith Brother Abiel. "This woman is my wedded wife, vowed to obey me. It is my will and pleasure that she come with me forthwith."

"Nay, Brother, Sister Patience is no prisoner," I remonstrated, but he put my hand off roughly.

"She is vowed to serve and obey me," he answered, "and while I live I'll hold her to her vows --"

"I fear that will not be too long, brave Captain Abiel," spake a soft voice from the whispering lilac bushes growing by the way, and forth stepped Master Nicholas. "We have a little business to attend to, thou and I. The trifling matter of thy soul -- remember?"

Now at these words my brother went as haggard as a corpse, but he put a brave face upon the matter. "Who art thou?" he demanded roughly as he could albeit his voice was small and still as that of conscience.

A light laugh, tittering as a woman's, came from Master Nicholas, but there was neither mirth nor laughter in his eyes. "And dost thou truly not know me?" he demanded. His voice increased until it was a mighty shout like storm-wind raging through the stricken forest, and suddenly his stature seemed to grow until he tower-
ed taller than the tallest maple rustling its red leaves beside the road. "To some I'm known as Master Nicholas, some call me Old Nick, but there are others who know me by names more dreadful: Apollyon, Belial, Asmodeus, Abaddon, Izad..." Then all at once he shrank to human size again and stood there laughing at us like a conjurer who grins at yokels he has mystified with his tricks. "Come, Captain Abiel, thy place is readied for thee alongside Master Cutbourne, and I grow weary waiting. I have other business to transact this night."

Now I was sorely tempted to keep silence, for it had come to me that brother or no brother Abiel was no fit mate for gentle Patience; that he would make her life one long misery, and so I hated him with sinful hatred. But the blood of our forbears flowed in his veins as well as mine, and so, although my knees were quaking and my voice no stronger than the squeaking of a mouse, I spoke up:

"Now soothly, Master Nicholas, methinks that thou hast done less than justice by my brother. I grant you he did say he'd give his soul to live in wedlock with Mistress Patience but--"

"Nay, Master Eliab," Old Nick break in, "thou hast the wrong of it. He promised me the soul from his body in return for wedding her, and he hath wed her with both book and ring tonight. I did not promise him connubial joys, nor did he bargain for them."

Now when he spake thus it seemed that Old Nick had me upon the hip, but suddenly I bethought me. "Thou wouldst not have thy contract aught but legal, Master Nicholas?"

"Nay, marry, I who am the very prince of lawyers am a stickler for the letter of the law in all things."

"Why, then, thou'd wish to have thy agreement conformable to the lex loci contractus--the law of the land wherein it was made?"

"Indeed!"

"What value wouldst thou set upon the soul of a New Englander, a man who knoweth the Scriptures like the lines of his own hand, who is never absent from divine worship unless on business for the Commonwealth, who swears not overmuch and drinks but little more than is good for him?"

"Why, ten pound sterling; mayhap ten pound two and six."

"Precisely, Master Nicholas, and wot ye not the statute of our sovereign Lord King Charles--the one passed in the twenty-ninth year of his reign to outlaw frauds and perjuries?"

Old Nick took chin in hand and thought a moment. "Old Rowley I know, truly. I've had mine eye on him this many a year, but of his statute I know naught. What are its terms, Eliab?"

Then I rehearsed the law for him by rote:

"No contract for the sale of goods, wares or merchandise for the price of ten pounds sterling or upwards shall be allowed to be good, except the buyer shall accept part of the goods so sold and actually receive the same, or give something in earnest to bind the bargain or in part payment, or that some note or memorandum of the said bargain be made and signed by the parties to be charged by such contract or their agents thereunto lawfully authorized."

"Now tell me, Master Nicholas," I pressed, "Didst thou pay anything, even so

1. Stat. 29 Car. II., Ch. 3, Sec. 17, (1676)
little as one pine-tree shilling, in earnest to my brother?"

"Nay," answered he.

"Or didst thou receive and accept the smallest tittle of the merchandise thou bought?"

"In truth, I did not," saith Old Nick.

"And finally, hast thou a written note or memorandum of the contract, signed by my brother or his agent?"

"I have not," he denied.

"Why, certes, then, we cannot hold thy contract to be good, nor hast thou any legal claim. Unbend my brother and be off about the business thou hast spoken of. Retro Sathanas! Abire ad tum locum! Thy contract hath no more law than a monkey hath a waistcoat."

Now as I spake Old Nick's swart face grew almost merry and his black eyes twinkled gleefully. "By all the names that men have called me, Eliab, me seemeth that thou hast had me for a gull!" he chuckled. "Still, as the saying is in these parts, 'tis better to be shaved by a sharp razor than scraped with a dull one, and I bear thee no ill will. Upon mine honor -- which is greater than some will admit -- I do not.

Go thy ways and take the fee thy clever pleading hath earned thee, 'Twill not be long forthcoming, I promise."

But when he turned on Brother Abiel his countenance had lost its merriment. His face had grown hateful, aged, sly. "They do not prosper who make bargains with Old Nick and seek to 'scape them, Captain Abiel," quoth he. "'Tis to the fine edge of thy brother's wit, not thine own merit, thou ow'st freedom. Eftsoons we'll meet again, and thou! It not have thy clever brother Eliab for advocate." Then suddenly the sun dropped down behind the western hills like a shot bird and it was dark. Old Nick was nowhere to be seen."

"Alack, Son Abiel," quoth Dame Deborah, "why stand ye gawking into nothingness, thou and Eliab? Come thy ways; the roasting meats will be burnt to a coal."

My brother drew his sleeve down his sweating brow. "He said --" he faltered like a babe that cannot form its words aright -- "that we should meet again --"

"Alackaday, what talk is this?" crieth Dame Deborah. "Who is it that said what? For more time than a body would take to count fifty thou and Eliab have stood there starring into nothing, like silly birds charmed by a grimalkin!"

At that my brother Abiel laughed witlessly and put his hand out for his newly married bride, but in that instant the long roll of the drum came from the common, and we heard the rallying-cry of the trained band: "To your tents, O Israel, the savages be risen again!"

30th Oct. 1677 -- Yestereven came Ezekiel Stevens from the backwoods, ghastly with loss of blood and sore afflicted with a score of wounds. He had but strength to pant his story forth before he fell into a swoon from which he hath not yet awakened, mager all the efforts of the leeches.

He is the sole survivor of my brother's company of six who were ambushed by the Merrimack and perished fighting gallantly. He saw my brother fall pierced by an arrow through the throat, and saw a red-skinned savage beat his brains out, then rip the reeking scalp from his skull. Moreover, he swear that in the instant of my brother's passing he spied a foreign-seeming man in a green coat and red breeches hovering in the underbrush. Some say it is but an hallucination of battle, others fear that the Frenchers incite the savages to war. But I recall the parting words of Master Nicholas when he took leave of Brother Abiel and me. Alas, my brother...!

When all was told I hid me to Abiel's mansion to offer sympathy and help to Sister Patience. I thought she never would have done weeping when I imparted the drear tiding, and finally made bold to lay a hand in comfort on her shoulder, whereat she shook my fingers off and looked at me with eyes so bright their brightness fairly
burnt the tears away.

"Canst thou not see I weep for joy?" she asked at length. "I who was a captive am at last a free woman — mine own woman. Nor husband nor parent shall now stand between me and that I most desire!"

"And what dost thou desire, Sister?" asked I marvelling.

The rosy color dyed her face, but her bright eyes were steady as she answered, "What but thyself, 0 overbashful Eliab? What but thyself, whom I have loved since we were in Dame school together?"

Now when I heard these words from her I'd worshipped secretly since childhood the breath came hot and fervid in my throat and all the strength went from my legs so that I kneeled before her and hid my face in her robe and stayed thus without speaking for a long while.

And presently she laid a hand upon my head and spake gently, yet with a sweet impatience, "Nay, Eliab, kneel not to me; I am no heathen goddess. Stand on thy feet and clip me in thine arms. October nights grow chill, and I have but cold comfort lying by my lone in yon great bed."

.....Seabury Quinn.....

IF I COULD SEE YOU

I could glimpse the far-off realms of Daddeo;
If again, I could see you.
I could visit the islands of mists and myrrh;
I could touch the fathoming depths of skies; grown white.
I could breathe with the ghosts of ancient mirage;
If again, I could see you.
I could sing with the sighing fountains of Faggi;
I could sleep to the rhythm of Rome's sizzling embers, grown black

But death hath rolled deep unto you,
And I cannot see you again.

...Bill Wolfenbarger
by Clark Ashton Smith

Clark Ashton Smith (1893 - 1961) is just now becoming recognized as a literary master. Unlike the bulk of his contemporaries, he was equally at home writing poetry or prose, although he once remarked that he would like to be remembered as a poet. As with all writers, the personality molds the piece, and the personality is molded upon past experience. The factors making up the curious entity known as Clark Ashton Smith are much too lengthy to be delved into here (see IN MEMORIAM: CLARK ASHTON SMITH, Anthem, p3) but suffice it to say that the major influence on his literary development was well known American poet George Sterling. Sterling saw in Smith a fantastic literary potential, and, recognizing his duty to aid genius, made Smith his protégé. The two remained close friends until Sterling's death in the late 20s. Whether the pupil surpassed the tutor is a matter of personal opinion; many scholars are inclined to think that Smith so surpassed Sterling that there is not even a comparison in this field. Be that as it may, Sterling's help was an integral part of Smith's poetic development, and it is interesting, therefore, to find this article by Smith telling of a visit to Sterling. It is a remarkable piece, unearthed by Mrs. Smith when we were compiling IN MEMORIAM: C.A.S. Space limitations kept many pieces from appearing -- this included. Note that the manuscript is not complete. Many Smith manuscripts were burned in the fire which consumed his cabin; some, like "The Dead Will Cuckold You," were restored; but Smith did not live to restore this one. We can only regret the loss and take pleasure in what is left. By way of an aside -- MIRAGE readers might compare the style here to that of George Haas in MIRAGE #5... THE EDITOR
My sixteen years' friendship and correspondence with George Sterling began, like so many human relationships, through another friendship. In 1911, when I had reached the age of eighteen, Miss Emily J. Hamilton, late of Oakland, was teacher of English literature at the Auburn High School. Though not one of her pupils (since my formal schooling was already finished) I had been showing her my verses for some months. These verses she was so good as to criticize and, on occasion, praise. One day she said: "Why not send some of your poems to George Sterling?"

The suggestion both delighted and dismayed me. It seemed rather like venturing to address a demigod, and I was a little doubtful whether the deity could even be reached through a medium so mundane and prosaic as the mails. Since my fifteenth year I had sought, read and admired with almost acolythic fervor everything published by Sterling in current magazines, together with his two early volumes of poetry. It was anomalous, even fabulous that such poetry could be written by a contemporary. How could I find the preception to approach this Apollonian being with my own Marysas-like crudities?

My friend reassured me. The demigod not only had a local habitation but was, she hinted, very human -- almost, if anything, too human. He was gracious, kindly, helpful, to the novices of the Muse. She had known him in his Piedmont days, with Jack London, Joaquin Miller, Herman Whitaker, Herman Scheffauer. If I wished, she would write him a letter introducing my verses and me.

This began a correspondence that was to end only a week prior to Sterling's death in Nov., 1926. From the first, his letters showed the interest of a master in a promising pupil; and soon they were tinged with the affection of an older brother writing to a younger. I believe he regarded me as standing, in relation to him, somewhat as he had been in relation to Ambrose Beirce; and sought to pass on, in his turn, the critical help, encouragement and praise when he had received from Beirce. His letters were rich in technical instruction and correction, though perhaps over-enthusiastic. They chronicled his movements, the poems he wrote, the people he met; they flashed with incisive observations, admonitions, touches of gentle humor, epigrams of pagan philosophy or timely comment. They were marked by unfailing solicitude and thoughtfulness. They contained snatches of self-revelation that were boyishly frank. Unconsciously, they sketched the outlines of a character brave, noble, generous in the antique manner; self-forgetful to a fault; modest for himself but eager to proclaim a friend's worth; responsive to beauty in every living nerve, whether the beauty was that of an ocean sunset, a line of poetry, a mountain, or a woman's face.

My first meeting with Sterling was delayed till late in June, 1912, when, at his long-repeated invitation, I went down to spend a month with him in Carmel. I remember well the circumstances. Sterling had come with a horse and wagon to meet my train in Monterey but had somehow missed me at the station. CAS was told by the train conductor to get off at San Jose, and had to purchase another ticket to Monterey, to get a later train, or so he confided many years later to his wife. He had delayed accepting GS's invitation until GS finally understood the delay, and sent him ten dollars to pay train fare. The cost of the second ticket took the remainder of his money. He never, of course, told Sterling that he'd walked to Carmel because he'd had no money left, nor of why he was late. Ed.

Giving him up after a few minutes' wait, I decided to walk the four miles over the ridge to Carmel, and started in the thickening dusk through a country that was thrillingly new and strange to me. Some dweller on the outskirts of Carmel steered
me vaguely in the general direction of Sterling's house. The road ran obscurely through a black forest starred with infrequent lights, and seemed to end at the last visible light. A woman (Mrs. Michael Williams, I believe) redirected me. I had only to cross a wooden footbridge and follow a narrow, winding path down the ravine. There, in the pine-fragrant darkness, I came to the blurred outlines of a cabin and a house; I knocked on the cabin's door. A high, cracked, New England voice sang out, "Come in, Clark Ashton Smith!"

The cabin's kerosine lamp revealed a figure which, after all the years, and after the very silence and absence of death, seems much more presently alive and vital than many that walk the earth today. About him there was something of the world's youth, something of kinship with its eternal life and the agelessness of the sea. His fine brown aquiline features, his strange mingling of grace and vigor, made one think of a beardless Sylvan or Poseidon. Somehow, in spire of its modernness, his very costume contributed to the impression of viability: he wore golf-clothes and stockings of dark green, with a green bow tie and brown canvas shoes. In lieu of a leopard-skin, of a wreath of vine-leaves or sea-wrack, the garb was not too inappropriate.

His first gesture, after our greetings and explanations, was the pouring of a joint libation from a wicker-covered gallon demijohn filled with muscatel. The spicy golden wine was indeed the nectar of Parnassus. It was made, I believe, in Monterey; but no muscatel of these latter seasons has ever had quite the same savour and potency.

Thus, for me, began a month of rare companionship and happiness. At that time Carmel consisted merely of one main street and a woodland in which the scattered houses were mostly lost to sight. On one side, between Sterling's house and the main street, the pine forest stretched unbroken, peopled only by jays and quail and rabbits. Here Sterling could hunt game or collect pine-knots and logs for fuel. The sea, though hidden from view, was not far distant; and its murmur mingled always with the murmuring of the tree-tops. It was a milieu of enchantment for a boy who had lived wholly heretofore amid inland hills.

Robinson Jeffers has written of Sterling's Indian-like familiarity with the coast about Carmel. Truly, he was the genius of that scene and nothing escaped his observa-
tion and knowledge. I remember the hidden sea-cavern that he showed me below Point Lobos; the places where wild strawberries grew the thickest; the abalone reefs; and the fur-
tive incursions of a strange lurid red fungus that he pointed out to me on the Lobos cypress. This fungus, in latter years, has increased so much it seems to illumine the boughs and boles of certain trees as with the reflection of hellish fires; but in 1912 it was confined to a few scattered thumbnail patches.

Like all who love life greatly, Sterling loved the sea: its changing moods and colors and voices; and the things that lurked in its ultramarine depths or were cast up on its towny beaches. Almost it seemed at times that he was native to that third element, like one of the Swimmers in his own weird and lovely poem.

At the time of my visit, Sterling had given the use of his house to John Kenneth Turner, author of BARBAROUS MEXICO, and Turner's wife and children, Turner being in temporary financial difficulties. Sterling was occupying the little cabin he had built for Nora May French; but, turning this over to me, he moved into a little tent for the duration of my stay.
He spoke often of Nora May French, that strange and tragically gifted girl who had ended her life with poison in the same bed in which I slept nightly. She had, it seems, previously attempted to shoot herself with his revolver and had brought him a tress of her athen-blonde hair clipped away by the bullet. He showed me the very spot beside the path up the ravine where this attempt had occurred, according to her statement. But, oddly, there had been no powder marks on her hair. I do not recall that he attributed her suicide to unrequited love for James Hopper; but there had been other reasons...perhaps sufficient ones.

She was, he said, the most changeable person he had ever known: incredibly radiant and beautiful at times; at others, absolutely dull and colorless in her appearance. One day he brought out a manuscript of hers dictated during the delirium of illness. It was full of an otherworld weirdness; but I can remember nothing of it, but that it was "such stuff as dreams are made of" and therefore immemorable as dreams.

On one occasion, I recall that George told me to keep the cabin door shut at night. "If you don't," he warned, "the cat will come in and jump on the bed. You'll think it's hiss X trying to climb into bed with you, and you'll be scared." "Oh, no," I rejoined, "I'll probably think it's Nora May's ghost, and I won't be scared at all. I'm sure that her ghost would be a lovely one." "You certainly have an imagination," he commented, half admiringly, half deprecatingly.

Sterling was alone then; his wife Carrie (whom I never met) being in Oakland. I have said that he was the genius loci of that coast: he was also the presiding genius among the artists in Carmel, who included Fred Bechdolt, Michael Williams, Herbert Heron, Redfern Mason, John Northern Hilliard, Grace McGowan Cook, and Chris Jorgensen. George was their leader in a standing feud with the forces of reality and "civic progress," headed by Berry Newberry, who wished to urbanize Carmel and promote a boom in lot-buying and house-building. The war was fought lustily and bitterly; and the two factions were scarcely on speaking terms.

Life, however, seemed simple and leisurely there. Almost every morning, if I recall rightly George took me on a round of calls, often distributing surplus game among his friends. There were wagon-rides up the Carmel valley, along the 17 mile Drive to Point Lobos, and a sea-fowl haunted spot several miles below Lobos where we picnicked with the Turner family. There were mussel-stews and incredibly complicated "mulligans" cooked amid the white sand-dunes; there were walks to Pebble Beach and in the woodlands carpeted with yerba buena and wild strawberry plants.

Also, there were rituals to be observed, such as the pounding of abalone steaks with a big wooden mallet on a boulder in the back yard; and the making each afternoon of a huge pitcher of punch, compounded subtly with Bourbon and soda, sliced pineapple, and mint from the meadow-bottom below the house. I was privileged to purvey the mint. George often commented on my temperance, since I would never exceed a fourth glass of that delectable brew.

I do not recall any excessive drinking on George's part; unless the term can be applied to his consumption of numerous bottles of beer at a beach picnic. Later he apologized, saying that beer was a swinish drink. But the Saxons (he believed himself to be mainly of Saxon blood) had always been prone to it. Either on this occasion or some other, he maintained the superiority of the Saxon over the Gaelic peoples. Perhaps he had this prejudice in mind when he wrote the lines of that splendid lyric, The Princess on the Headland:
Anyway, his prejudices were always strongly held and stoutly supported. Among others, he frankly disposed the men of more affairs and money-making divorced from all else. "They are mutts," he said. "That's what their women call them...."

Regarding women, his advice was often sage, and often exquisitely raflsh. "Don't ever let a woman get the upper hand of you," he counseled. "Rule them with a rod of iron."

His physical fitness was remarkable but he told me that he had not always been so robust. He brought out a photograph taken during his Piedmont period -- "Look how thin I was then!" Indeed, the picture was all profile -- an esthetic-looking shadow. He attributed the improvement in his health to a system of exercises devised by Sanford Bennett, a San Francisco business man who claimed to have rejuvenated himself when past fifty. The exercises were based on a principle of alternate tension and relaxation; and one in particular involved massage of the abdominal muscles under tension. It was supposed to strengthen the digestive powers.

Many years later I began to experiment with Bennett's system myself, and can testify that its claims are far from exaggerated.

At the end of my Carmel stay, Sterling accompanied me to San Francisco, from which city I returned shortly to Auburn. We spent a night in Oakland as the guests of George's friend, Roosevelt Johnson, who seemed as distinctly an incarnation of the old Roman world as George was of the Greek.

A.H. Robertson, Sterling's publisher, had agreed to bring out my first volume of verse, THE STAR TREASER AND OTHER POEMS.

George was indefatigable in assisting me with the endless correction of galley and page proofs exchanged by mail. Previously, he had advised me in the choice of poems for the collection. The numerous letters that he wrote me at this time, as well as those in regard to my subsequent volumes of verse, testify eloquently to his unbounded generosity and helpfulness toward a fellow-aspirant to the muse's laurels.

Our next meeting occurred early in 1914, just prior to Sterling's departure for New York after his final separation from Carrie. After visits to Colt Bierce and Jack London, he stopped in Auburn and spent some time with my parents and me. I remember that he was "on the wagon" at the time but had brought along an immense box of chocolate candy, most of which he consumed himself, with the result of a sleepless night! During that brief visit he endeared himself greatly to my parents.

He was vastly interested in a mining-shaft which my father and I had started, and often referred to it in his subsequent letters from the east. He sent me from New York the ms. of a mining story he had written, and asked me to revise it in regard to the correct legal points of claim-staking and filing. These details my manuscript stops short. It resumes on p. 11 of the manuscript. **

** Sterling also assisted me in choosing the poems for ODYSSEY AND SONNETS published by the Book Club of California for which Sterling wrote the preface. Three years later he was to write the foreword for my third volume, EBONY AND CRYSTAL.

I made occasional visits to San Francisco during those years, and George was always my companion and cicerone. He was then domiciled permanently at the Bohemian Club. Many of my memories of him are associated with the Club, and with such favorite Latin restaurants as the Trattoria Bolognese (more familiarly known as the Bologna) presided over by the affable Bigin. Here, as elsewhere in San Francisco, the spirit of Bohemia was not unduly subdued by the devastations of the Volstead Act.

I recall, too, that George took me on charming visits to Mrs. Travis (Lawrence Zenda) and the tall, statuesque blonde Mrs. Warlock, whom he called "Boadicea."

One day, in that den of silence and solitude, the Bohemian Club library, he gave me the manuscript of Lilith to read.

Either I did not wholly grasp the play's tremendous import and poetic opulence at that first hasty reading, or else I was backward in expressing my appreciation; for, after its publication, he seemed surprised at the enthusiasm with which I wrote of it.
in a letter. Truly, it is a magnificent thing, and without parallel in modern literature, apart from the poetic plays of Swinburne and D'Annunzio.

I like to recall those evenings at Bigin's, which have about them the charm of a time irrevocably vanished and remote.

George, a little grey, was still master of the revels. Stella was gone, but there were other dancers in that world such as Marie Parmalee, and the two Nicol girls, Margaret and Amaryllis, whom I had known during their childhood in Auburn.

George Sterling died in 1926. (The last time that my friend and I met face to face was during 1927, between Christmas and New Years. He was ill in bed at the Bohemian Club: the result of an over-successful Yuletide celebration. I remarked then the semi-monastic bareness of his room, aside from the pictured constellations of feminine beauty on the walls. There were few books. He told me that he no longer cared to accumulate many possessions. Long since, **

Here the manuscript ends in burned fragments. It is a tragedy that miscellaneous works as these had to be lost in whole or in part, but instead of crying over the irretrievable, let us be thankful for what we have left. ...Clark Ashton Smith...

Annotations in the preceding article were by Mrs. Clark Ashton Smith and Jack L. Chalker.

AFTERTHOUGHT

No more pain, no more care,
No more worries to make me pull my hair.
No more hatred, no more woe,
No more grief to make the tears flow.
No more love, no more affection,
No more women to make me lose direction.
No more alcohol, no more dope,
No more crime to make me lose all hope.
No more this, no more that --
But there must be something,
Just no more isn't very encouraging.
Tell me, Death, where are we going?

...John Edward Yox
DAVID HENRY KELLER certainly needs no introduction to fantasy fans, nor to those younger or regular readers of MIRAGE. A familiar and brilliant contributor to the genres of fantasy, science fiction, and psychiatric horror stories, he here presents us with a dogmatic scientist who, when confronted with a Keller problem of the highest import, tries to find by the scientific method whether a man will actually go to Hell...

THE MOVING FINGER

by David H Keller

Because Blazine was preeminently a scientist he was so lacking in emotion that he never seemed quite human. But, when he talked you forgot his small, twisted body, ugly face, uncombed hair; only his coldly deliberate voice impinged on the sensorium. He was analytical in everything he said and did; his entire concept of life was founded on positive facts painstakingly confirmed in the laboratory. He never made a statement unless he could prove it; once he arrived at a decision he became extremely caustic if it was mildly doubted and contemptuous if it was boldly challenged. All persons he contacted were automatically divided into two groups: those who agreed with him and were therefore right and those who differed with him and were perforce wrong.

Often I deliberately initiated an argument, not because I believed I was wholly right, but a controversy provided an opportunity to study his peculiar defense reaction which had been his armor for many years.

"You are wrong because you do not agree with me," he always retorted, "and you differ simply because you do not have the mental capacity to understand the subject."

For years he had worked in various fields of medical scientific research to prove beyond cavil his theory that man was simply an electrically controlled piece of machinery. That idea interested me. I visited him in the autopsy room, watched him section the brain and listened patiently to his long lectures on the gross anatomy of the nervous system. Seated on a high stool in his laboratory he would study the beautifully stained microscopical shavings from different areas of the cerebrum or cerebellum. Often he asked me to look at a nerve bud, a dendrite, or a neuron.

"In all this study of the nervous system have you found any trace of the soul?" I asked him one day following a most interesting session.

"You ask that because you are an old-fashioned psychiatrist," he replied, his voice heavy with supreme contempt. "What is a psychiatrist? Nothing more than a childish dreamer. You study folklore, anthropology, comparative religions, symbolisms. The principles you formulate are like the playthings of a child. Now you talk about the soul! I tell you there is none. What is intelligence? Just an elaborate card index of human experience. What is thinking? Simply the use of this index by miles of small nerves which carry electrical impulses beautifully coordinated and capable of selecting the needed information contained on certain cards. A storm breaks certain wires and the patient becomes what you call psychotic. Destroy all the wires and he dies. Death eventuates because the electrical power is cut off."
"How about the Man at the switchboard?" I asked. "Why not call him the soul?"

"There is no 'Man at the switchboard.' The entire machinery is like an automatic telephone. You do not call an operator for a number. Instead, you simply dial the number."

"That may be correct, but someone, something has to do the dialing, make the connection. Who is that? What is it? How did it get inside the body? Can you find a switchboard anywhere when you study the gross anatomy of the central nervous system or look at the little stained sections of the brain through the microscope?"

For a long time he remained silent, eyes close to the microscope. At last he looked up and turned to me. "No one is dialing. It is all automatic. Electrically contr-rol-led! Someday we will have higher powered microscopes, more delicate instruments with finer precision. Then we will all know more."

"How about the new encephelographic machine?"

"That may help. The hospital has ordered one. Within a month it will be installed and in operation. I shall be in charge of the new department. Perhaps I will be able to show you psychiatrist that all mental abnormalities are simply defects in the electrical system. Then you will be forced to adopt a new nomenclature for mental diseases, based on scientific principles instead of the morbid conjectures of Freud. It may be possible for even you to stop talking about the soul."

Two months passed before I found time to visit him in his new laboratory, located in an isolated wing of the hospital. The long underground tunnel leading to it was posted with KEEP SILENT signs.

"I have much of interest to tell you," Dr. Blazine said, almost kindly and evidently glad to see me. "I have here the finest encephelographic machine in the country. Let me explain. The patient being examined is placed in that room, the walls of which are made of fine wire-like mosquito netting. Thus the four walls, floor, and ceiling are all insulated against unfavorable electrical currents. When the patient is on the table two electrodes are fastened to his head. I have six locations to place the electrodes: frontal, occipital, parietal, right, and left. Electrical power is generated by cerebral activity. That power flows through two fine wires to a delicate pen when traces a line on paper moving on a revolving drum. Thousands of tracings have shown us the normal curve of a person free from any cerebral injury. Here is a normal tracing. Notice how even it is; like the edge of a saw."

"In simple language you place the patient in a bird cage while from his brain flows electricity which makes a moving finger write,"

He did not notice my interruption. "But when some of the wires are destroyed there are departures from the normal tracing. Here is the tracing from an epileptic. Notice the frequency with which the pen oscillates more rapidly with wide sweeps. We call them 'bursts' and they show some nerves have been destroyed. In this patient we knew that he had received a brain injury resulting in epilepsy. The machine located this trauma in the left occipital region. An operation there may remove scars, relieve pressure, and cure the patient --"

"Or make him worse," I commented.

"Spoken with the pessimism of a true psychiatrist. My last patient will interest you. All agree that he was a bad boy. His tracing showed a definite defect, double frontal, with the 'burst of psychic epilepsy. I treated him for that disease and now he is greatly changed, becoming a good boy."

"I am proud of this case because a psycho-analyst reported that the boy had been badly conditioned in childhood. If you had studied him you would probably have said that his soul was sick. Four hundred years ago his conduct would have been attributed to Devil possession. Now I have proven that a birth injury caused a small blood clot. Accurate diagnosis, Doctor, made possible by a new scientific machine. One hundred cases like that and I will be able to toss your ideas of a soul, conditioning, symbols, and environmental influence into the scrap basket."
"The moving finger writes and having writ moves on," I quoted. "I have an idea for a future development of this machine. What would happen if we discovered minute variations in the normal sensations and from these form words? Could the thoughts of a man in that wire bird cage be transmitted to the tracing? Would the scientist then know what the man was thinking? What changes that would make in criminology! Perhaps the soul, the man at the switchboard, might send a message! I have catatonic patients who have not talked for years. With this machine we could read their minds and then be able to understand their behavior."

Blazine smiled. "It is not improbable. Perhaps in twenty -- thirty years -- it may become possible."

"It fascinates me!" I exclaimed. "As the moving finger writes it will not only record but clearly reveal the thoughts of the patient. Then what will you call it? Could we say that the man at the switchboard is talking? If he is can we call him the Soul?"

I left him abruptly, forstalling any reply and returned to my office. That night I could not sleep; there were too many things to think about. However the insomnia proved beneficial, for during the long, restless hours I had so novel an inspiration that I was dazed by the possibilities. The next day I read and thought about the case history of one of my patients; who had been a hospital resident for many years. After making a bedside examination I realized that Alec Monroe was an ideal patient for the proposed experiment.

Later I made an appointment with Dr. Blazine for ten o'clock that evening. "You are a scientist, Blazine," I began, "and I am a dreamer. I am offering you a chance to explode my dream of the existence of a soul. I shall propose an experiment that has never been made, has not even been imagined by any scientist. It may show something or nothing at all but I feel that it has to be made. We must work fast because the patient is failing rapidly and will die tonight."

"What has that to do with it?"

"First let me tell you about the patient. Alec Monroe is a catatonic. For twenty years I have cared for him and made careful notes in his case history. During all these years he has lead a vegetable existence. He has talked to me only once but what he said was most interesting. Let me read to you my notes of an incident which occurred twelve years ago:

"Patient in bed as usual. Motionless; apparently uninterested in his surroundings. Seemed to take no notice of my presence. I whispered to him, "Alec! Why do you do as you do? To my astonishment he opened his eyes and looked at me, moistened his lips with his tongue and said, breaking the silence of years, 'The devil is after me, Doctor; after my soul. As long as I stay in bed, do not talk or move, but keep on fighting my soul is safe. If I stop fighting he will take my soul to Hell and torture it. But as long as I live I am going to keep on fighting.' Again he lapsed into silence."

"As far as I know he has been mute ever since. Now he is dying from tuberculosis. I want to bring him here and start the two moving fingers writing.""

"I don't understand you," replied Blazine. "What have two tracings, one of the brain and the other of the heart, to do with a dying catatonic who only once told of his fear that the devil would take his soul to Hell? I tell you again that there is no devil, no soul, and no Hell!"

"I know how you feel but please help me with this unusual experiment. We will bring Alec down here and, as death seems near, lay him on the table in the bird cage. We will attach the electrodes to his frontal lobes. At the same time we will connect his body to the electrocardiograph machine. The two revolving drums can be placed side by side.
Thus we will be able to watch the two moving fingers simultaneously write the messages from the brain and heart. The finger recording the messages from the heart will suddenly stop moving; that will show us that Alec is clinically dead. What will the other moving finger show, Doctor?"

"I do not know! No one has ever tried to find out."

"It will either stop or continue writing. If it keeps on writing we will then know that the man at the switchboard remains there after the rest of the body is dead."

"What of it?"

"Simply this. There are various sects throughout the world who believe that a soul may be saved for a future life if certain rites are performed before death. There is also a concomitant belief that the soul remains within the body until the onset of rigor mortis and that, if these rites are given between what we call clinical death and rigor mortis, the soul is saved from eternal damnation. Mankind has believed this for uncounted centuries, for the archaeologists have discovered traces of the prehistoric use of such rites rather similar to their use today. So you see that my theory that the man at the switchboard remains on duty for a few hours after clinical death has ample support from the past and present.

"Monroe thinks the devil is after his soul. He will fight as long as he can. He may share the belief of many millions that the soul is safe for a few hours after death but at the onset of rigor mortis has to leave the body and may then be captured by the devil. Perhaps the tracings for those few hours after the heart stops beating will indicate something. I do not know what it will be, but here is your chance to experiment; to scientifically confirm or explode a theory men have believed in for centuries."

"I will do it," Dr. Blaziné agreed. "It will be interesting. I am confident it will show nothing. How can any nonexistent thing impinge on our sensorium? But even a negative result will be worth while. I predict that the two pens will stop writing simultaneously."

Alec Monroe was still alive but examination showed that death could be expected momentarily. Hastily we carried him into the bird cage, placed him on the table, and then attached the four electrodes, connecting them with the encephalographic and cardiographic drums on a table outside the cage. Seated in front of them we intently watched the two moving fingers write their message. The heart message was so weak that at times the pen seemed to stop. Blaziné tersely commented on the brain curve.

"Normal wave. No evidence of previous frontal trauma. Heart is failing rapidly but the brain is still functioning normally."

Even as he spoke the finger showing the heart beat faltered and then stopped.

"Alec is clinically dead," I stated. "but look at that other drum. The brain is still alive! The man at the switchboard is still in control!"

Blaziné did not move. He glanced at the wall clock to note the time and then continued to watch the moving drum and the continued tracing of brain activity. Ten minutes passed, half an hour, an hour, during which neither of us spoke. Another tense hour passed of watching the moving finger write its message on the paper.

"Two hours!" exclaimed Blaziné suddenly. "And the brain is still alive! I did not think it possible!"

"The man at the switchboard," I said. "The soul is still in the body!"

Blaziné made no reply. I wondered if he had heard me.

Three hours passed, and then four. The tracings were now definitely weaker, smaller but still regular. Suddenly the pen moved up and down with tremendously swift sharp strokes in such depth as to almost over-reach the edges of the paper.

"It is a typical 'burst!'" cried Blaziné.

"It is more than that," I answered, tense, nerve-wrecked and spiritually exhausted from the long hours of waiting. "It means that rigor mortis has set in. The soul has to leave the body!"

I threw open the door of the wire enclosed room and strode toward the table. Alec's head was drawn back. On his parted lips was the terrible smile of the risor sardonicus.
The face was twisted into a loathsome gargoyl-like mask. His wide open eyes were filled with a stark terror so horrible that I could hardly force myself to look at him.

"Look at those eyes, Blazine! I believe that man saw something as frightful as any description of hell ever given. The fate he feared for so many years has overcome him. His soul, outside the body, could no longer fight. Don't you understand, Blazine? Don't you understand that the Man at the switchboard had to leave? Do you still think that everyone is automatically controlled?"

Dr. Blazine, ashen-faced, stood shivering, his knuckles sharp and white as he gripped the edge of the table. For the first time in his scientific life he faced a problem that had no factual solution. His eyes were filled with a mixture of incredulity and fear. "I do not know what to say or think," he murmured, shaking his head. "It was a completely scientific experiment, a control pared with other data. But I do not know."

"I simply do not know!"

...David H. Keller, M.D....

AN INTERNECINE MONSTER

Amazing, how a hole in the earth
Can shatter so much mirth!
The sun was shining — a beautiful day;
People alive, happy and gay.
They never knew what hit them I guess,
But they sure did end up a mess.
One won't leave my dreams alone,
To this day I can hear that mournful moan
And the wailing of his kids who will call him "Dad" no more,
Of which I'm really sure.

You ever see a bag of laundry that had been torn open,
That the articles had fallen out of — about ten?
Well, I saw what reminded me a lot of one that day...
A man — his innards hanging out in a dreadful way.

Something else I probably shouldn't tell,
But I can't forget that horrid smell.
The smell of death... How many times have I read these words!
Meaningless! But now it girds my hapless olfactory nerves as a vise to metal.

On that day, somehow I thought of a flower with a wry, meek petal,
Something that contrasted other thoughts, so
By mind was playing tricks I know.

I had a friend who went with the rest,
Although he was most likely better than the best.
Just the same, he is gone, and I'm still here trying to discern
Could it be that dissolution of so many before my eyes,
Or the fear of the many lies
They may have been forced to tell
For if there were many, they can but cease to be in Hell.

—John Edward Yox
It has been considerably bruited about in certain quarters, and indeed, even taken very much for granted, that H.P. Lovecraft, one of the modern masters of the macabre, exercised an extensive influence on the late Clark Ashton Smith and his writings. August Derleth and Donald Wandrei in their introduction to Smith's first major prose collection, *OUT OF SPACE AND TIME*, tell us that "in prose [Smith] was constantly encouraged and influenced in large part by...H.P. Lovecraft." Anthony Boucher, in his review of the above Smith volume (see *UNKNOWN WORLDS*, 4/43), calls Smith "the outstanding disciple of H.P. Lovecraft." And Zelia Bishop, in her *H.P. LOVECRAFT: A PUPIL'S VIEW* (see *THE CURSE OF YIG*, Arkham House, 1953), calls Lovecraft "the spiritual father of a group of devoted followers" and then proceeds to list Smith as one of these "devoted followers."

The assertion of a Lovecraftian influence on Smith has been made principally on the grounds of Smith's contributions to and borrowings from the Cthulhu mythology invented by Lovecraft. Now it is a matter of fact that Smith and Lovecraft maintained for about seventeen years a friendship through correspondence, from about 1920 until Lovecraft's death in 1937. It is possible that they began their correspondence through the suggestion of their mutual friend, Samuel Loveman (to whom Smith dedicated his third volume of poetry, *EBONY AND CRYSTAL*, in 1922). By the time that they first made each other's acquaintance through the medium of letters, Lovecraft had already gained a considerable reputation in the United Amateur Press Association (which he had joined in 1914), although it wasn't until 1923, with the founding of *WEIRD TALES*, that Lovecraft began to acquire his wider fame as a writer of macabre tales. Smith had made his debut in the Bohemian literary and artistic circles of San Francisco, Sacramento, etc., in 1912 with his first volume of poetry *THE STAR TREADER AND OTHER POEMS*. Since that year he had become a recognized poet of considerable stature, at least in his native state of California. In 1918 the Book Club of California had published fifteen of Smith's poems in an edition deluxe entitled *ODES AND SONNETS*, and later presented to him, in recognition of his services to literature, a bronze plaque designed by the noted sculptor Edgar Walter, an honor bestowed only on such distinguished literary men as George Sterling and Edwin Markham. The correspondence-friendship of E'ch-Pi-E1 (as Lovecraft would characteristically sign himself) and of Klarkash-Ton (as Lovecraft was in the habit of addressing Smith) must have been an unusually rewarding and mutually stimulating relationship as the two
men, evidently shared many similar views, tastes and opinions. Lovecraft's SELECTED LETTERS, the first volume of which will be published in 1964, will reveal at least Lovecraft's side of this long-time correspondence; what has become of Smith's letters to Lovecraft this writer has been unable to discover.

The seventeen year long correspondence of Lovecraft and Smith is thus a matter of fact. But the nature of Lovecraft's "influence" on Smith, if such it may be called, is more difficult to determine. Smith himself once indicated the extent and nature of his contributions to and borrowing from the Lovecraft mythos, in a letter dated July 21, 1953, (in HOARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT: MEMOIRS, CRITIQUES, BIBLIOGRAPHIES, SSR Publications, 1965) in which he listed those stories of his which could be considered as more or less related to the mythos.

These tales, ten in number, are listed as follows: "The Coming of the White Worm," "The Door to Saturn," "The Holiness of Azedarac," "The Nameless Offspring," "The Return of the Sorcerer," "The Seven Geases," "The Tale of Satampra Zeiros," "The Testament of Athammanus," "Ubbo-Sathla," and "The Weird of Averoos Vuthogquan." Smith then states his contributions to the mythos as being the gods Tsathoggua and THE BOOK OF EIBON, both of which Smith himself invented and which Lovecraft promptly adopted into his myth-pattern. To determine the precise extent of any Lovecraftian influence on Smith, let us systematically catalogue, story by story, both Smith's uses of his own Cthulhu Mythos contributions as well as Smith's uses of his borrowings from it.

"The Coming of the White Worm," Smith informs us, is an entire chapter from his invention, THE BOOK OF EIBON, but there are no mentions of Lovecraftian deities, or any implicit connection with same. In "The Door to Saturn" Smith's own invention, the god Tsathoggua plays some part.

In "The Holiness of Azedarac," the BOOK OF EIBON has a pivotal role, and Tsathoggua as Sogdai and the Lovecraftian deity Yog-Sothoth as Log-Sotot, are both mentioned, twice, as follows: "Brother Ambrose has... beheld the veritable manifestation of Lilit, and even of Log-Sotot and Sogdai, those demons who are more ancient than the world..." Or, "...the BOOK OF EIBON, which contains... the secret, man-forgotten lore of Log-Sotot and Sogdai, is now missing." Or, "...again he shuddered at the trans-galactic horror of the demon Sogdai, and the ultra-dimensional hideousness of that being known as Log-Sotot to the sorcerors of Averôigne."

Smith uses a quotation from the NECRONOMICON of Lovecraft as a heading to THE NAMELESS OFFSPRING, a quotation invented by Smith himself. There is no mention of Tsathoggua or of Lovecraftian deities either in the quotation or the story itself.

In "The Return of the Sorcerer," the NECRONOMICON, alone, has a featured role, and within the story occurs a Smith-invented quotation from the book, without mention of any Lovecraftian or his own gods.

Smith's own invented deity Tsathoggua plays some part in "The Seven Geases," and plays a fairly prominent role in "The Tale of Satampra Zeiros." And in "The Testament of Athammanus," Knygathin Zaum, descended from Tsathoggua and the "swart, Protean spawn... from the elder worlds," has a pivotal role.

In "Ubbo-Sathla," Smith's own BOOK OF EIBON has a fairly prominent role, and the NECRONOMICON is mentioned - once. There are two quotations: from the first-named book, the first used as a heading to the story, the second within the story's context. In the second quotation there is no mention of deities, although in the first Smith's Tsathoggua as Zothaqquah, and Lovecraft's Yog-Sothoth as Yok-Sothoth and Cthulhu as Khulhut, are all three mentioned once, as follows: "Before the coming of Zothaqquah or Yok-Sothoth or Khulhut, Ubbo-Sathla dwelt in the streaming tens of the new-made Earth..." As for the NECRONOMICON: "Tregardis [the protagonist] had collated the French volume [of] the BOOK OF EIBON in a medieval French translation with the frightful NECRONOMICON of the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred."

In "The Weird of Averoos Vuthogquan," the entity in the cavern who circumstances the death of the protagonist, is described as being "outrageously unhuman" and definitely
non-terrestrial in appearance. Tsathoggua is mentioned once, in an oath by the entity, as follows: "'By the black altar of Tsathoggua, 'tis a fat money-lender....'" There is no evidence, however, that this entity is related to Tsathoggua, the relationship only being inferred.

Finally, in Chapter III of Smith's unfinished (and so far unpublished) novel THE INFERNAL STAR, Lovecraft's NECRONOMICON is mentioned once, as follows: "...the protagonist, Oliver Woodley had already begun the study of certain excessively rare tomes, such as THE NECRONOMICON and the writings of Hali." (This last is a reference to the writings and writer invented by Bierce for a quotation preceding Bierce's tale "An Inhabitant of Carcosa").

Let us summarize then the uses Smith in his own tales has made of two of Lovecraft's own invented gods and of one of Lovecraft's own invented books. (We may safely ignore the uses to which Smith, in his stories, puts the god Tsathoggua and THE BOOK OF EIBON, as Smith has Tsathoggua and his other invented gods enter into the action of his tales in a manner quite different from that in which Lovecraft manipulates his gods in his own fictions. And Smith certainly possessed a perfect right to feature, in his very own stories, the god Tsathoggua or the BOOK OF EIBON, as had not Smith himself invented them, contributions though they might be to Lovecraft's mythology?) Yog-Sothoth is mentioned three times in one story. The NECRONOMICON is mentioned once in one story and once in another -- twice, altogether. Cthulhu is found only once. Another quotation from the NECRONOMICON is featured prominently -- in one story.

Featuring Lovecraft's NECRONOMICON in one story, quoting two Smith-written passages from it, mentioning the book twice in other stories, mentioning two of Lovecraft's gods altogether less than a dozen times in all his stories, and adding one god to Lovecraft's ultra-mundane pantheon, and one book to Lovecraft's library of forbidden texts -- is this any evidence of a real literary influence by Lovecraft or Smith? If all the enumerated data above are evidence of such an influence, than it is, at best, a very superficial one. But let the following figures speak for themselves. Smith wrote about 120 stories; ten of these, by Smith's own reckoning, are more or less related to the Cthulhu mythology of H.P. Lovecraft -- that is, one-eighth, or less than ten per cent of Smith's total short story output.

The real influence of Lovecraft on Smith, if "influence" it may be called, was that of a friend who encouraged Smith to write short stories. Lovecraft had been inspired to do this upon examining certain poems in prose by Smith, some of which are essentially condensed short stories. But there is no evidence that Smith might not have written short stories without Lovecraft's suggestion. Indeed, there is fairly good evidence that Smith was gravitating toward the creation of short stories purely under the urging of his own personal daemon.

There can be relatively little serious discussion, then, of any real Lovecraftian influence upon Smith -- any more than his influence upon Lovecraft -- unless we recognize it as a mutual "influence," which, again, does not seem to be the right word. This writer is of the considered opinion that the correspondence-friendship of Lovecraft and Smith may be best characterized as one of mutual stimulation, encouragement, advisement, admiration, and appreciation.

Unlike so many of Lovecraft's correspondence with others, often characterized by a teacher-pupil relationship, the Lovecraft-Smith correspondence was distinguished by the fact that the two men, when they met through letters, met on equal ground, as equals, and with many similar views, tastes, and opinions.

In his excellent study SUPERNATURAL HORROR IN LITERATURE, Lovecraft before his death rendered an eloquent homage to Smith's genius, and after Lovecraft's death Smith paid homage to his friend in two beautiful poetic tributes, "To Howard Phillips Lovecraft" and the sonnet "H.P.L." and in a letter to "The Eyrie" in WEIRD TALES, 7/37, and in a letter to Claire Beck published in "A Note from the Editor" in THE SCIENCE FICTION CRITIC, 5/37. But long before Lovecraft died, Smith had already paid public homage to him by contribut-
ing (at E'ch-Pi-El's urging and invitation) to Lovecraft's ingenious Cthulhu mythology one god and one book, and by adopting into some of Smith's own tales a few of Lovecraft's inventions from this same mythology. And thus it is as a fitting and poetic tribute to the genius of his great friend E'ch-Pi-El that we may best regard Klarkash-Ton's Cthulhu mythos borrowings and additions.

Donald S. Fryer...

As a footnote to the preceding it might be added that the only place in which Smith attempts to tie in systematically any of his deities with those of Lovecraft's creation is not in one of Smith's tales but in a letter written by Smith to R.H. Barlow sometime before Lovecraft's death. This letter was later published in \textbf{The Acolyte}, Summer, 1944, and republished in the \textbf{Shuttered Room and Other Pieces} by Lovecraft. In this letter Smith postulates for a few of his deities (used in his Averois and Hyperborean tales) a genesis in the Lovecraftian universe, "in Azathoth, the primal nuclear chaos."

In Smith's story "The Dark Eidolon," laid in Zothique, the last continent of Earth, the "older gods" and the "elder demons" are mentioned in paragraph one as having returned to man, the gods and demons of Hyperborea, &c, and Poseidonius but, however, with different names. But which of these "older gods" and "elder demons?" Smith does not say; and there is little or absolutely no justification to tie them in with any Lovecraftian deities.

It may be mentioned that Smith, unlike Dunsany or Lovecraft, seemed to have been little concerned with or interested in creating any over-all mythology or any cosmogony. While some of Smith's gods are inter-related, the bulk of them appear to have no relation to one another. There was no intent to create a myth pattern. Rather, within a given tale, Smith would invent and use, whenever need and inspiration arose, one or two gods, usually with strong symbolic overtones.

In only one tale, "The Monster of the Prophecy," does Smith theorize any cosmogony, and then only within the terms of the ultra-mundane culture featured therein. The tongue-and-cheek cosmogony is apropos "Cunthamosi, the Cosmic Mother," with: "Cunthamosi was worshipped as the source of all things: mer maternal organs were believed to have given birth to the sun, the moon, the world, the stars, the planets, and even the meteors that often fell in Satabbor." (Satabbor is a planet of the sun Sânarda, known to terrestrials as Antares.)

---DSF---

ERRATA FOR "IN MEMORIAM: CLARK ASHTON SMITH":
acknowledgements: lithography credit should read (Harvey Forman & Associates)
xiii - "Clark Ashton Smith" by Theodore Sturgeon. Dates should read "1893-1961"
p61 - close the "P" in the title "Cuckold"

Further corrections will be listed in \textit{Mirage} if and when they come in.

\textbf{In Memoriam: Clark Ashton Smith}, edited by Jack L. Chalker, with an Introduction by Ray Bradbury and material by Mr. Fryer, Theodore Sturgeon, Fritz Leiber, L. Sprague deCamp, Ethel Heiple, Litterio Farsaci, the George F. Haas memorial from \textit{Mirage} \#5, and material, including poems, a story, and the never before published weird play in blank verse by Klarkash-Ton himself, "The Dead Will Cuckold You," is still available from us in a limited and numbered edition, bound between heavy paper covers, printed on heavy book paper, illustrated by Dave Prosser and Harry Douthwaite. Supply is dwindling. \$3.00 while they last.
H.P. LOVECRAFT'S
HISTORY & CHRONOLOGY OF
THE 'NECRONOMICON'

TOGETHER WITH A FEW PERTINENT PARAGRAPHS BY
AUGUST DERLETH

Long before the death of H.P. Lovecraft in March, 1937, a considerable body of legend had grown up about the mythical NECRONOMICON, so frequently alluded to in his major short stories and novels. The editors of Weird Tales, librarians, booksellers, and fellow writers were applied to by dazzled readers for information leading to the whereabouts of copies of this rare book; many of the applicants refused to believe that the book did not exist and was the sole creation of H.P. Lovecraft, and actually bluntly turned back such information as being designed to keep them from getting hold of the book. Prior to his death, Lovecraft prepared a whimsical "History and Chronology of the Necronomicon," as follows:

Original title Al Azif — Azif being the word used by the Arabs to designate that nocturnal sound (made by insects) supposed to be the howling of daemons.

Composed by Abdul Alhazred, a mad poet of Sanaa, in Yemen, who is said to have flourished during the period of the Omidea Caliphs, circa A.D. 700. He visited the ruins of Babylon and the subterranean secrets of Memphis and spent ten years alone in the great southern desert of Arabia, the Roba El Khaliye or "Empty Space" of the ancients and "Dharna" or "Crimson Desert" of the modern Arabs, which is held to be inhabited by protective evil spirits and monsters of death. Of this desert many strange and unbelievable marvels are told by those who pretend to have penetrated it. In his last years Alhazred dwelt in Damascus, where the NECRONOMICON (Al Azif) was written, and of his final death or disappearance (A.D. 738) many terrible and conflicting things are told. He is said by Ibn Khallikan (twelfth century biographer) to have been seized by an invisible monster.

in broad daylight and devoured horribly before a large number of fright-frozen witness-ess. Of his madness many things are told. He claimed to have seen the fabulous Irem, or City of Pillars, and to have found beneath the ruins of a certain nameless desert town the shocking annals and secrets of a race older than mankind. He was only an indifferent Msaalim, worshipping unknown Entities whom he called Yog-Sothoth and Cthulhu.

In A.D. 950 the Azif, which had gained a considerable though surreptitious circulation amongst the philosophers of the age, was secretly translated into Greek by Theodorus Philetas of Constantinople under the title NECRONOMICON. For a century it impelled certain experimenters to terrible attempts, when it was suppressed and burnt by the patriarch Michael. After this it was only heard of furtively, but Claus Wormius made a Latin translation later in the Middle Ages (1228), and the Latin text was printed twice -- once in the fifteenth century in black letter (evidently in German) and once in the seventeenth (probably Spanish); both editions being without identifying marks, and located as to time and place by internal typographical evidence only. The work, both Latin and Greek, was banned by Pope Gregory IX in 1232 shortly after its Latin translation, which called attention to it. The Arabic original was lost as early as Wormius' time, as indicated by his prefatory note; (there is, however, a vague account of a secret copy appearing in San Francisco during the present century but later perished by fire) and no sight of the Greek copy -- which was printed in Italy between 1500 and 1550 -- has been reported since the burning of a certain Salem man's library in 1692. A translation made by Dr. Dee was never printed, and exists only in fragments recovered from the original manuscript. Of the Latin texts now existing one (fifteenth century) is known to be in the British Museum under lock and key, while another (seventeenth century) is in the Bibliotheque Nationale at Paris. A seventeenth century edition is in the Widener Library at Harvard, and in the library of the Haskatonic University at Arkham; also in the library of the University of Buenos Aires. Numerous other copies probably exist in secret, and a fifteenth century one is persistently rumored to form part of the collection of a celebrated American millionaire. A still vague rumor credits the preservation of a sixteenth century Greek text in the Salem family of Pickman, but if it was so preserved, it vanished with the artist, R.U. Pickman, who disappeared in 1926. The book is rigidly suppressed by the authorities of most countries, and by all branches of organized ecclesiasticism. Reading leads to terrible consequences. It was from rumors of this book (of which relatively few of the general public know) that R.W. Chambers is said to have derived the idea of his early novel, THE KING IN YELLOW.

1. Al Azif written circa A.D. 730 at Damascus by Abdul Alhazred.
2. Translated into Greek as NECRONOMICON, A.D. 950 by Theodorus Philetas.
3. Burnt by Patriarch Michael, A.D. 1050 (i.e. Greek text -- Arabic now lost).
4. Claus translates Greek into Latin, A.D. 1228.
5. Latin and Greek editions suppressed by Gregory IX, A.D. 1232.
7. Greek text printed in Italy, 1500-1550.
8. Spanish translation of Latin text, 1600?

Despite the obvious spoofing of this fictional history and chronology, despite the sly admixture of historical names and dates with such fictional references as the Pickman family of Salem (cf. Pickman's Model), and the attempt to suggest that the NECRONOMICON, invented by Lovecraft, had influenced the writing of Chamber's THE KING IN YELLOW, written years before, when in fact Lovecraft had drawn upon the Chambers book for the embroidering of the myth pattern of which the NECRONOMICON was a vital part, hundreds of readers continued and doubtless continue to believe that this fancied book actually existed. The letters continue to come from those who want to get their hands on the book, doubtless for nefarious purposes.

Perhaps the NECRONOMICON was a pat subject for a hoax, and it was not surprising therefore to find in catalog number 78, issued in summer 1946, by Phillip C. Duschen of New York, the following item: "511, THE NECRONOMICON. By Abdul Alhazred. Translated
from the Arabic into Latin by Olaus Wormius. With many woodcut tables of mystic signs and symbols (Madrid), 1647. Small folio, full calf, full calf with elaborate overall stamping in blind, including the date, 1715. Binding somewhat stained and rubbed, very slight foxing, mostly in first 30 pages. Page 781-2 has at one time been almost completely ripped out, but has been skillfully repaired. Otherwise in fine condition. $575.00. One of only fourteen known copies of the first Latin edition, and one of the only three complete copies in the United States, the others being in the Library of J. Pierce Waltemore in McCook, Nebraska, and the library of Miskatonic University, Arkham, Mass. Only two copies of the manuscript in Arabic were known, and both were in Europe before the war. Their fate is not yet revealed. The author, Alhazred, is said to have been hopelessly mad when he wrote the work; several almost incoherent passages lending credence to this story. Yet Von Junst, in his UMAUSSRECHLICHER KULTEN, states (p.Ix) '...es steht ausser Zweifel, dass dieses Buch ist die Grundlage der Okultliteratur.'

Winfield Townley Scott hailed the notice in his column, Bookman's Gallery in THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL, as a "Considerable item." He went on, after quoting the listing, to add "Now that is enormously interesting because, so far as I am aware, everyone who has written about Lovecraft has assumed the NECRONOMICON to be an ancient book of demonology which existed only in Lovecraft's mind. As August Derleth says in H.P.L.: A MEMOIR, '...Lovecraft drew up a history and chronology so convincing that many a librarian and many a bookdealer has been called upon to supply copies.' Well -- barring an expensive and unlikely hoax -- Mr. Duschesne's listing reveals that the NECRONOMICON does exist. But note the cream of the jest (I suppose inadvertent) in the Duschesne's cataloging: the copy at 'the library of Miskatonic University, Arkham, Mass.' Wheels within wheels. There is of course no such University or town -- except in Howard Lovecraft's stories."

Mr. Scott in his enthusiasm was hoaxed, of course; he missed the additional jest in Mr. Duschesne's bland quotation of another imaginary time, the Von Junst UMAUSSRECHLICHER KULTEN -- how well I remember the discursive correspondence with R.E. Howard and Lovecraft as to whether the book, then in process of being invented, should be given this title or another, slightly less suggestive! -- as evidence. The hoax, naturally, was quickly exposed; I wrote Scott at once that if indeed any such book were offered, it was a fraud, unconditionally, and Duschesne himself wrote to Scott: "Of course the whole thing is a hoax and the give-away is the fact that I mentioned a copy in the University of Arkham, Mass., both the university and the town being non-existent in the State of Massachusetts. You asked why I did it and I do not know other than that I was tired of cataloguing real books for many years and I thought I would make one up for the fun of it. I think I may be excused on the basis that a little laugh now and then is worth having."

Coincidentally, the Duschesne hoax was publicized in the Saturday Review of Literature, in the columns of William Rose Benet, who, with his brother, Stephen Vincent, had been among the first widely-known writers to recognize the specific if limited genius which was H.P. Lovecraft's at the same time that L. Sprague deCamp was featuring an article on pseudobiblia, including the NECRONOMICON, a portion of his forthcoming book on the subject.

Doubtless the legend of the NECRONOMICON will continue to grow. True, several enterprising amateur writers have besieged Arkham House to permit them to "write" the book, but this, of course, could not be done; the book is a literary property, of course, as the invention of Lovecraft, and duly under copyright protection. Nor could Arkham House or the estate of H.P. Lovecraft sanction so wanton a hoax, no matter how seriously done or how well-intentioned. It would certainly amuse and entertain H.P. Lovecraft if he could know the spurious reality his invented book has assumed in the years since its invention.

END
BOOKS

OUT OF THE MIDWEST

THE SECRETS OF DR. TAVERNER, by Dion Fortune. Llewellyn Publications, 100 South Wabasha Street, St. Paul 7, Minnesota. $4.95. 234p.


We seldom receive books for review here, usually discussing books picked up through the book clubs, for the collection, or from the local library. However, we are in receipt of a very fine volume of weird tales from a new publisher, Llewellyn Publications. Llewellyn is an occult publishing house of the first magnitude -- meaning that they specialize in books dealing with astrology, secret societies of the occult, etc. -- not as fiction, but as fact. Although a rather old company in its field, it has just recently been revitalized by younger blood, in the form of Carl Weschcke, a MIRAGE subscriber. They put out divers books on astrological matters, including a yearly MOON SIGN BOOK and a MOON SIGN BOOK QUARTERLY, as well as a rather interesting magazine, NEW DIMENSIONS, from their British offices. The Spring, 1963 MOON SIGN QUARTERLY, it may be mentioned in passing, has a good deal concerning John W. Campbell's latest experiments in the Goodavage attempt (and a damn good one) to predict the weather by the stars. Skeptics like myself not prone to ridicule or a dogmatic rejection of theory no matter how unusual will find the material fascinating; NEW DIMENSIONS features some rather good British fantasy fiction as well. For the believer, it's a treasure trove.

But what should interest virtually all MIRAGE readers is Weschcke's decision to bring back into print in rather handsome editions the works of that great British weird tale writer, Dion Fortune. This particular volume, THE SECRETS OF DR. TAVERNER, is a connected series of short stories that will delight the fantasy fan not yet familiar with her work. Dr. Taerver is a psychiatrist in the early days of that science, yet he is also somewhat of a Carnacki, well versed in the rituals and able to cope with both the supernatural as well as physical and mental ill. And he, too, has his Watson, who recounts the most bizarre and unusual of these cases for the world. The stories are well written and fast-paced, although the plot, at times may seem a bit familiar. This is only because these are stories of a pioneer in the modern fantasy field, professional and polished -- but also first. She reports in a short Introduction that many of these incidents are fictionalized versions of actual occurrences. I'll leave that one to Charles Fort's successor, and read them for the entertainment value.

The book is somewhat marred by a very long "introductory" essay that has nothing whatever to do with the book and is by Llewellyn's Gareth Knight. You may find it interesting, yet ask, like me, "What's it doing here?" The jacket is by Hannes Bok, and, while much less
involved than the Bok we're used to -- and, oddly enough, much less imaginative, although skillfully drawn in that 3-D quality for which Bok excels.

The most prohibitive thing about the book is the $4.95 price tag, which is rather steep for a small, compact, 231-page volume, however fine the stories or however well produced the book. Perhaps as Llewellyn grows, the price will become more reasonable.

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WHO FEARS THE DEVIL? is the long-awaited collection of all the "John the Minstrel" fantasy stories, with coupling pieces of sorts, from F&SF. As you probably know, the "John" series is perhaps the only really good fantasy to come out of a magazine in the past few years. These stories concern a wandering ballad singer known only as John, who comes back from the war to wander his beloved Carolina mountains. Adventure and more he finds, and in doing so encounters the legends the author himself has been told by the incomparable North Carolina mountain folk.

We may only hope that this, one of the great fantasy achievements of recent years, is the last we see of John the minstrel. We need more stories like these.

The jacket, by Lee Brown Coye, is not one of that artist's better works -- a semi-hideous scene with a rather idiotic-looking John standing atop it, but this is not too bad within itself. You either like Coye or you don't and, in the main, I don't.

In passing, it's interesting to note the science fictional element in some of the stories -- they, while keeping their own consistent mood, range from straight weird, to Lovecraftian tale, to modern fantasy, to almost straight science fiction. "Old Devlin's Was A Waiting," the best of a very good lot, concerns both supernatural vengeance, a hill feud, and Fortean -- and Rhine-type ESP -- metaphysics and parapsychology. "One Other" turns from straight weird to a science fictional tale of multiple dimensions, whereas "Vandy, Vandy," is a straight fantasy concerning a conjure man who fears only George Washington -- and even today, with reason!

Get this one.

**

Advent: Publishers, is another new publishing house, with, as yet, very few volumes to offer, although such items as a revised Tuck SCIENCE FICTION HANDBOOK and Alva Roger's history of ASTOUNDING are promised, along with KNIGHT ON SCIENCE FICTION, the sequel book to their fastest seller, IN SEARCH OF WONDER. Advent, in case you didn't know, specializes in books concerning the field rather than books presenting it. Histories, bibliographies, miscellaneity so vital to the field's continuance.

The first book here, THE EIGHTH STAGE OF PANDOM, is nothing more than a series of essays by Robert Bloch -- a big book, well bound and well worth the asking price. The essays, mostly humorous, are taken from Bloch's other side -- the one that's been writing for fanzines for over 25 years now. The pieces are often humorous, sometimes very satirical, and in a few instances serious and probing commentary on the field. Still, it's primarily a fun book, to be read in fun for fun -- such as the so-called advertisement in the middle of the book which reads, "WHY WEAR A TRUSS? But, on the other hand, what else can you do with one?" Or the very funny satirical play BIRTH OF A NOTION, in which a poor writer named Sadberry sees his finest SF work, CENTEGRADE 69, come out of the Hollywood mill as "IA AND PA LETTLE BOIL," ending with Sadberry's plea to retain the title, even after his conversion to Hollywood style thinking. He winds up suggesting a sequel, "SON OF CENTEGRADE."

If you want fine fantastic weirds, and straight drama, DON'T buy this book. But if you like a little laughter in your diet, a readable, preservable series of chuckles and barbed commentary on society, then you can not afford to pass this Bloch up.

THE PROCEEDINGS: CHICON III is a different matter entirely. A fine paperbound book, liberally sprinkled with photographs, giving you a transcript of a very fine convention -- everything is here in print but the parties. So, get this book, a good bottle of Scotch, and presto -- instant convention. A valuable and interesting document, and a service to the field. The speeches -- excellent. If you don't own this what are you doing reading MIRAGE? And there will be one soon of the 21st convention!

...the editor...
Because of the extraordinary gap between issues, it would be almost ridiculous to feature year-old letters on an issue no longer available from us. We said last time also that we wouldn't go into the "Matter of Taste" feud any more—that it was ended, both in actuality and discussion. But there are a few things left in order to wind this up effectively. This is the last issue of Volume One—let MIR and Vol. Two start something else anew. The following letter, and answer, offered in explanation, is the final chapter. *#* signifies new paragraph.

A LETTER FROM MIKE DECKINGER

As I told you, there were a few things about Andrews' letter in the current MIRAGE I wanted to comment about. *#* For someone who hasn't read the story in question, Al makes a lot of claims that are based purely on assumption and hearsay. He accuses me of having proclaimed I'm an atheist in letters, print, and word of mouth. I never have. Al obviously means that since I've said things which were critical of certain aspects of religion I am therefore a devout atheist. By this same line of illogic anyone who criticises the Yankees is a baseball-hater. Further on, he proudly points out the fact that he has never been disturbed by what I've written, because he doesn't expect any kindness from me. If this were truly the case I fail to see why he truly wasted two pages in this issue displaying his disinterest in me. *#* I'd like Al to tell me where I've advocated atheism, and how I've been fervently striving to have everyone renounce their own religion in favor of non-religion. Frankly I don't give a damn whether a person wants to believe in God or not. But at the same time it doesn't mean I have to approach this religion with kid gloves, and treat it only with deftness and mystification. If I feel the need to criticise something then by gosh I'll do it, and bringing in irrelevant points about my proclamations of atheism won't mean a thing. *#* Al displays some superior aloofness that seems to characterize all the critics of my "Christmas story." They go on at great lengths to point out its insignificance, implausability, nuisance value, and why I should be castigated verbally for ever spreading such a horrendous concept. And I won't take credit for the basic theme of the story—its been done done time and again, which must make former authors equally guilty and fitting targets for Andrew's resentment. *#* Turning to page 46, Andrews' letter takes an interesting turn from the muddled suppositions and half-truths that formed the basis of the preceding lines. His paragraph over my delight at your comments is absolutely true; I won't dispute a word of it. This does not apply to me alone; it's human nature to derive pleasure over someone beating his brains out over an innocuous item. Everything that Andrews said holds a large grain of truth there—I don't mind seeing anyone get flustered over the story, whether you, Al, or anyone else. *#* I have no plans for a sequel. *#* The whole point of Al's letter seems to be centered upon the gross misconception of my character. Elitely assuming that I'm a fire-breathing atheist, and then working out from there, with that untruth as the foundation, he's bound to come up with a whole flock of untruths to follow. I usually have respect for Al's opinions, but he is all wrong in his implied relationship between merely knocking a religion and thorough atheism. Just as he is wrong when he assumes that "Revelation" was written as what I considered gospel (pardon the pun) truth.
It certainly was not. I don't know if it's the truth and once more (this'll floor you, Al) I don't care. Any faith lasting 2000 years, no matter what I or anyone else may think of it, is in little danger of being shaken to its foundations by an insignificant little story which most people received with indifference. If Al is so perceptive as to realize that your fiery editorial was a great source of amazement (it was) then he should also realize that his letter, which contains a number of unfounded assumptions, then tries to analyze my character and "callous disregard for others" provides some equally amusing parts. If Al is that concerned about my character he should hire a psychiatrist to strap me down on a couch and see what makes me tick. But don't go telling what I am and what I will do instate of almost complete ignorance of my views.

**

Fords, New Jersey, 9/4/62

M ilk Deckinger

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR:

Actually, Mike, as you probably know by now, there was quite a bit more to the blasting of the piece in MIE than anyone else has been told. Yes, I happen to adhere to many of the basic Christian beliefs, though I attend no church, and yes I was very mad that you'd write that tale in a family-style fanzine (meaning by family that it usually goes to a large subscription list of a wide variety of ages). The plot is an old Jewish joke that may go back to 4 B.C. for all I know -- Lord, I've heard and read much worse. I still think that it was a good bit more violent than your "merely knocking" religion. Yet, if I really was the violent evangelistic sort many people think I am, how do you think that I've skipped blasting any of the GOD COMICS, which are probably the most revolting items of bad taste and disrespect for the beliefs of others. Primarily, I object not so much to a discussion -- even a diascension -- of religion (witness the editorial this issue!) but rather a point blank salvo at all who do not believe as thee.

The reason why there have been no more attacks is that I milked that bit dry. Yes, I disliked the piece, but it was hardly an outpouring of emotion. On the contrary; that editorial went through fourteen drafts before I finally, painstakingly, and with much unemotional and rational thought, got the thing to look just right -- emotional and irrational, and calculated to make people mad. No offense, I hope to those poor people who got sucked into this thing, but literally I engaged in the old sport of "people baiting." This people baiting was for a reason, however.

After ELEIDOSCOPE (MIE) I was in dire financial straights -- a student with no money and no experience, stuck with a number of commitments to a fanzine and never having done one before in my life (Al was primarily the work of Harry Bressher, although I got the material). The fanzine was about to fold, our having enough for but one more issue. So, when on a cold Christmas Eve in Norfolk, Virginia Phil Harrell angrily showed me "Revelation" (I never even owned the copy and this is the only time I saw or read it) I got an idea. At the time you were one of the most popular fan writers around, and Buck enjoyed his same popularity as now. So I wrote the piece, three months after reading it, with the intent to spark a feud and the onrush of publicity that came with it. Well, it worked -- enough curious people sent in money to find out what was going on that I was able to bring out MIE 4 and 5 and not take a loss!!! Further, the publicity drew MIRAGE into the forefront, and instead of being buried in the flood of fanzines, it stood out. MIRAGE #5, which netted a Hugo nomination, and this issue are here because of my mercenary application of the people-baiting principle. I have no regrets, no remorse, for the reward is the nomination, and likewise in the many fine people who've come together in the final product, MIRAGE, in the letters and comments of people who found pleasure out of the little magazine you inadvertently and indirectly financed and publicised.

It's dirty, yes -- but before you people, now disillusioned, send in your nasty cards and letters, ask yourself "Have I received enjoyment out of MIRAGE?" If you have, then no matter what the feeling, the whole bloody mess was worthwhile.

THE EDITOR
This is the sixth fanzine put out under my name, and I think it's a very good one, although not exceptionally so. Basically, this note is to give some little explanation for the delay between #5 and this one. It's been 15 months now, and I deeply regret it. Mark Owings was telling me at a recent Baltimore Science Fiction Society meeting that "if it weren't for your continued assurances that MIRAGE will be out soon, I'd think it had folded."

Basically, I had hoped to have one out in December, 1962, when Dr. Keller's A FIGMENT OF A DREAM came up and displaced all other commitments. Once this project was done, I was resolved to get MIRAGE out -- in February, 1963. Indeed, in that month I made preparations to bring the issue out, only to discover, to my great dismay, that of all our contributors in the past only Dr. Keller, bless him, had contributed anything at all to the issue. Certainly I could have written some fillers myself under different aliases, but that wouldn't have been MIRAGE, and it wouldn't have been the quality and variety that the name MIRAGE has come to mean in relation to its fantasy and science fiction content.

For the Lovecraft reprint I chose, and received permission to run, Lovecraft's annotated NECRONOMICON history/chronology, this coming in April. Don Fryer then submitted three fine pieces, one for IN MEMORIAM: CLARK ASHTON SMITH then in preparation, one a bibliography of Smith intended for IN MEMORIAM, and one intended for MIRAGE and in this issue. But that was it. So, I was just getting around to putting out a small MIRAGE when final examinations loomed from the University, and, after those were over, I found that I had less than 2 months to bring out the mammoth IN MEMORIAM: CLARK ASHTON SMITH before the world convention in Washington. So MIRAGE was shelved, but not forgotten.

After IN MEMORIAM was out, I was able to obtain from that great master of fantasy Seabury Quinn, whom I had met at the Discon, an unpublished short story in the best Quinn vein -- delightful also because it filled the gap in MIRAGE when people wrote and asked that Quinn or material related to Quinn be obtained. Now I had an issue.

In September I returned to college -- a different one than last year, and with a very rough schedule. This has kept all activity to a minimum. Now, in November, the day after Thanksgiving, I finally sit to type this last stencil. The last half of the 'zine was stencilled in one day, on a card table in front of the television. It was a tough and uncomfortable job, and now it's almost over. MIRAGE #6 is finally here, with my apologies. I did have an obligation to Arkham House to get them the authorized Lovecraft bibliography for THE DARK BROTHERHOOD AND OTHER PIECES, but I decided that MIRAGE came first and I'll fulfill that commitment starting next weekend.

After that, I hope to get a story or two written, and perhaps bring out MIRAGE ON LOVECRAFT sometime early next year. How early I won't say. After that -- or before, possibly -- I'll bring you MIRAGE #7, hopefully with the promised Gordon R. Dickson article, a Leiber article on HPL from the U. of Detroit Quarterly if Fritz gives his O.K., the 12 page SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CLARK ASHTON SMITH from Don Fryer, meant for IN MEMORIAM but left out because of space limitations, a riotous satire and burlesque on soap operas that will have you rolling in the aisles -- by H.P. Lovecraft! -- and other surprises. MIRAGE #7, except for Gordon's article, is in. MIRAGE #8 has nothing. Whatever happened to those old friends and MIR writers Gene Tipton, George Wagner, John Festa, Alan Dodd? Let's see some material, both from you and from the rest of you out there. MIRAGE will be out next year, but MIRAGE 8 will be out whenever we get the material. So, all of you -- I don't want to hear a single squawk if the gap between # 7 and 8 is long. You send us material and it will not be. Sit there and send nothing and....

THE EDITOR

Re: Because of the speed and impulse with which this issue was put together, Harry Douthwaite's fine illustrations are absent this time. Harry willing, they'll return next issue.