

THE FANTASY FAN

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OUR READERS SAY

"The May FANTASY FAN was just what its cover implied—peachy. It had just the right proportion of interesting items. Schwartz and Weisinger's column was just what was needed—most of their items were new and original. Just that!"—Lester Anderson

"Lovecraft's article is getting to be interesting enough to read through now, although I didn't think that it was very good during the first few parts. The article on Wells was particularly good."—David Stolaroff

"The May issue is, I must say, one of the best yet. 'Weird Whisperings' and 'Science Fiction in English Magazines' did I especially enjoy and am looking forward to the latter's promised column on African stf."—Daniel McPhail

"I am glad to note that Lovecraft's monograph is appearing in larger instalments. I hope that Baldwin will continue his 'Side Glances.' Glad my article on M. R. James was approved by so many readers. Later on, I hope to do some brief articles on other masters of the macabre and fantastic."—Clark Ashton Smith

"'Phantom Lights' outshines and stifles the reputation of 'Birkett's Twelfth Corpse.' But 'Dragons' destroys the illusion of 'Shadows.' Orchids to 'The Flower God,' the best Annal to date, and one of the choice stories that has appeared thus far in THE FANTASY FAN."—Robert Nelson

"THE FANTASY FAN came yesterday and I enjoyed every page. The orange stock paper improved the appearance greatly. The new type is

excellent also. The length of 'Our Readers Say' is just right. It should not be too long."—Duane W. Rimel

"I have just completed a reading of the May issue of THE FANTASY FAN. Lovecraft and Smith still stand out as my favorites. Some of the other articles proved quite interesting, particularly 'Weird Whisperings' and the two poems 'Shadows' and 'Dragons' were very enjoyable. The colored 'cover' marks another step forward. Keep up the good work."—H. Koenig

"The April issue of THE FANTASY FAN was fine! 'The Ancient Voice' by Eando Binder was the best story that I have read in a good many moons! And I don't mean maybe, either! Mr. Binder held me simply spellbound from start to finish! Let's have many more like this superb tale!"—Fred John Walsen

"The strength and beauty of Robert E. Howard's 'Gods of the North' in your March issue has influenced me to mark it for frequent re-reading. No other of his stories has appealed to me quite so strongly. I hope that you can induce him to write more stories in the same vein."—Chester D. Cuthbert

"Just received May FANTASY FAN and was agreeably surprised to see the 'cover.' That's one way of getting started on one. 'Weird Whisperings' by those master newshawks was very fine. The high spots in the issue were Barlow's Annals and 'Prose Pastels' by Smith. I never tire reading either of these two authors. I enjoy all the poetry you print and believe that you ought to have at least two pages of it."—F. Lee Baldwin

"I am enclosing a dollar this time for a full year's subscription. I find the little mag most interesting. Another thing I like about the book is that the Readers' Sayso includes letters from authors—which proves that they, too, read stories."—Gertrude Hemken

"I liked practically everything in the April issue of THE FANTASY FAN. The letters in the lengthened 'Our Readers Say' were interesting, 'Side Glances' was alright; you know I liked the feature story very much, and I was interested in reading the views presented on the topic I suggested, and the ads were good. So there!"—Forrest J. Ackerman

"I enjoy articles by Bob Tucker, Hoy Ping Pong, and Eando Binder's recent weird narration was fine."—J. Harvey Haggard

"I devour your magazine like a dog does a bone, but I usually read it first. The articles that appear beat anything ever written by Shakespeare and makes the works of Poe, Wells, and Verne look amateurish. Lovecraft, Smith, and Howard are the greatest writers of all time, in any branch of literature. Of course, because of the excitement my name would cause if it were printed in your magazine, please do not publish this letter. Just be satisfied in knowing that the greatest man in the world is one of your readers."—John de Rocka Fella

Sorry, Johnny, old kid, but your letter has already gone to press and it's too late to take it out now. I didn't read your last two sentences until too late.

BOOKS OF THE WEIRD

by J. Harvey Haggard

"Drums of Dambala" by H. Bedford-Jones is a crackerjack of a weird novel in case any of the rest of the fans haven't read it. As related by that master raconteur, we have zombies, ju-ju dances, and lots of thrilling action on that dark island of ancient magic, Haiti. "The Story of Superstition," a non-fiction book dealing with the origin of such quaint modern customs as throwing rice and laying corner-stones, is another absorbing book. After reading it, you'll wonder if man has wholly escaped from his belief in the supernatural after all. "Magic Island," by Seabrook, is another non-fiction book that will thrill you as much as the most imaginative tale. The author relates his experiences in Haiti, in which he goes native with the bushmen and witnesses the sacred dance never before beheld by white men.

From Beyond

by H. P. Lovecraft

Horrible beyond conception was the change which had taken place in my best friend, Crawford Tillinghast. I had not seen him since that day, two months and a half before, when he had told me toward what goal his physical and metaphysical researches were leading; when he had answered my awed and almost frightened remonstrances by driving me from his laboratory and his house in a burst of fanatical rage, I had known that he now remained mostly shut in the attic laboratory with that accursed electrical machine, eating little and excluding even the servants, but I had not thought that a brief period of ten weeks could so alter and disfigure any human creature. It is not pleasant to see a stout man suddenly grown thin, and it is even worse when the baggy skin becomes yellowed or greyed, the eyes sunken, circled, and uncannily glowing, the forehead veined and corrugated, and the hands tremulous and twitching. And if added to this there be a repellant unkemptness; a wild disorder of dress, a bushiness of dark hair white at the roots, and an unchecked growth of white beard on a face once clean-shaven, the cumulative effect is quite shocking. But such was the aspect of Crawford Tillinghast on the night his half coherent message brought me to his door after my weeks of exile; such was the spectre that trembled as it admitted me, candle in hand, and glanced furtively over its shoulder as if fearful of unseen things in the ancient, lonely house set back from Benevolent Street.

That Crawford Tillinghast should ever have studied science and philosophy was a mistake. These things should be left to the frigid and impersonal investigator for they offer two equally tragic alternatives to the man of feeling and action; despair, if he fail in his quest, and terrors unutterable and unimaginable if he succeed. Tillinghast had once been the prey of failure, solitary and melancholy; but now I knew, with nauseating fears of my own, that he was the prey of success. I had indeed warned him ten weeks before, when he burst forth with his tale of what he felt himself about to discover.

He had been flushed and excited then, talking in a high and unnatural, though always pedantic, voice.

"What do we know," he had said, "of the world and the universe about us? Our means of receiving impressions are absurdly few, and our notions of surrounding objects infinitely narrow. We see things only as we are constructed to see them, and can gain no idea of their absolute nature. With five feeble senses we pretend to comprehend the boundlessly complex cosmos, yet other beings with a wider, stronger, or different range of senses might not only see very differently the things we see, but might see and study whole worlds of matter, energy, and life which lie close at hand yet can never be detected with the senses we have. I have always believed that such strange, inaccessible worlds exist at our very elbows, *and now I believe I have found a way to break down the barriers*. I am not joking. Within twenty-four hours that machine near the table will generate waves acting on unrecognized sense-organs that exist in us as atrophied or rudimentary vestiges. Those waves will open up to us many vistas unknown to man, and several unknown to anything we consider organic life. We shall see that at which dogs howl in the dark, and that at which cats prick up their ears after midnight. We shall see these things, and other things which no breathing creature has yet seen. We shall overleap time, space, and dimensions, and without bodily motion peer to the bottom of creation."

When Tillinghast said these things I remonstrated, for I knew him well enough to be frightened rather than amused; but he was a fanatic, and drove me from the house. Now he was no less a fanatic, but his desire to speak had conquered his resentment, and he had written me imperatively in a hand I could scarcely recognize. As I entered the abode of the friend so suddenly metamorphosed to a shivering gargoyle, I became infected with the terror which seemed stalking in all the shadows. The words and beliefs expressed ten weeks before seemed bodied forth in the darkness beyond the small circle of candle light, and I sickened at the hollow, altered voice of my host. I wished the servants were about, and did not like it when he said they had all left three days previously. It seemed strange that old Gregory, at least, should desert his master without telling as tried a friend as I. It was he who had given me all the information I had of Tillinghast after I was repulsed in rage.

Yet I soon subordinated all my fears to my growing curiosity and fascination. Just what Crawford Tillinghast now wished of me I could only guess, but that he had some stupendous secret or discovery to impart, I could not doubt. Before I had protested at his unnatural prying into the unthinkable; now that he had evidently succeeded to some degree I almost shared his spirit, terrible though the cost of victory appeared. Up through the dark emptiness of the house I followed the bobbing candle in the hand of this shaking parody of man. The electricity seemed to be turned off, and when I asked my guide he said it was for a definite reason.

"It would be too much.... I would not dare," he continued to mutter. I especially noted his new habit of muttering, for it was not like him to talk to himself. We entered the laboratory in the attic, and I observed that detestable electrical machine, glowing with a sickly, sinister violet luminosity. It was connected with a powerful chemical battery, but seemed to be receiving no current; for I recalled that in its experimental stage it had sputtered and purred when in action. In reply to my question Tillinghast mumbled that this permanent glow was not electrical in any sense that I could understand.

He now seated me near the machine, so that it was on my right, and turned a switch somewhere below the crowning cluster of glass bulbs. The usual sputtering began, turned to a whine, and terminated in a drone so soft as to suggest a return to silence. Meanwhile the luminosity increased, waned again, then assumed a pale, outre colour or blend of colours which I could neither place nor describe. Tillinghast had been watching me, and noted my puzzled expression.

"Do you know what that is?" he whispered, "*that is ultra-violet.*" He chuckled oddly at my surprise. "You thought ultra-violet was invisible, and so it is—but you can see that and many other invisible things *now*."

"Listen to me! The waves from that thing are waking a thousand sleeping senses in us; senses which we inherit from aeons of evolution from the state of detached electrons to the state of organic humanity. I have seen *truth*, and I intend to show it to you. Do you wonder how it will seem? I will tell you." Here Tillinghast seated himself directly opposite me, blowing out his candle and staring hideously into my eyes. "Your existing sense-organs—ears first, I think—will pick up many of the impressions, for they are closely

connected with the dormant organs. Then there will be others. You have heard of the pineal gland? I laugh at the shallow endocrinologist, fellow-dupe and fellow-parvenu of the Freudian. That gland is the great sense organ of organs—I *have found out*. It is like sight in the end, and transmits visual pictures to the brain. If you are normal, that is the way you ought to get most of it.... I mean get most of the evidence *from beyond*."

I looked about the immense attic room with the sloping south wall, dimly lit by rays which the every-day eye cannot see. The far corners were all shadows, and the whole place took on a hazy unreality which obscured its nature and invited the imagination to symbolism and phantasm. During the interval that Tillinghast was silent I fancied myself in some vast and incredible temple of long-dead gods; some vague edifice of innumerable black stone columns reaching up from a floor of damp slabs to a cloudy height beyond the range of my vision. The picture was very vivid for a while, but gradually gave way to a more horrible conception; that of utter, absolute solitude in infinite, sightless, soundless space. There seemed to be a void, and nothing more, and I felt a childish fear which prompted me to draw from my hip pocket the revolver I always carried after dark since the night I was held up in East Providence. Then, from the farthest regions of remoteness, the *sound* softly glided into existence. It was infinitely faint, subtly vibrant, and unmistakably musical, but held a quality of surpassing wildness which made its impact feel like a delicate torture of my whole body. I felt sensations like those one feels when accidentally scratching ground glass. Simultaneously there developed something like a cold draught, which apparently swept past me from the direction of the distant sound. As I waited breathlessly I perceived that both sound and wind were increasing; the effect being to give me an odd notion of myself as tied to a pair of rails in the path of a gigantic approaching locomotive. I began to speak to Tillinghast, and as I did so all the unusual impressions abruptly vanished. I saw only the man, the glowing machine, and the dim apartment. Tillinghast was grinning repulsively at the revolver which I had almost unconsciously drawn, but from his expression I was sure he had seen and heard as much as I, if not a great deal more. I whispered what I had experienced and he bade me remain as quiet and receptive as possible.

"Don't move," he cautioned, "for in these rays *we are able to be seen as well as to see*. I told you the servants left, but I didn't tell you *how*. It was

that thick-witted housekeeper—she turned on the lights downstairs after I had warned her not to, and the wires picked up sympathetic vibrations. It must have been frightful—I could hear the screams up here in spite of all I was seeing and hearing from another direction, and later it was rather awful to find those empty heaps of clothes around the house. Mrs. Updike's clothes were close to the front hall switch—that's how I know she did it. It got them all. But so long as we don't move we're fairly safe. Remember we're dealing with a hideous world in which we are practically helpless.... *Keep still!"*

The combined shock of the revelation and of the abrupt command gave me a kind of paralysis, and in my terror my mind again opened to the impressions coming from what Tillinghast called "*beyond*." I was now in a vortex of sound and motion, with confused pictures before my eyes. I saw the blurred outlines of the room, but from some point in space there seemed to be pouring a seething column of unrecognizable shapes or clouds, penetrating the solid roof at a point ahead and to the right of me. Then I glimpsed the temple-like effect again, but this time the pillars reached up into an aerial ocean of light, which sent down one blinding beam along the path of the cloudy column I had seen before. After that the scene was almost wholly kaleidoscopic, and in the jumble of sights, sounds, and unidentified sense-impressions I felt that I was about to dissolve or in some way lose the solid form. One definite flash I shall always remember. I seemed for an instant to behold a patch of strange night sky filled with shining, revolving spheres, and as it receded I saw that the glowing suns formed a constellation or galaxy of settled shape; this shape being the distorted face of Crawford Tillinghast. At another time I felt huge animate things brushing past me and occasionally *walking or drifting through my supposedly solid body*, and thought I saw Tillinghast look at them as though his better trained senses could catch them visually. I recalled what he had said of the pineal gland, and wondered what he saw with this preternatural eye.

Suddenly I myself became possessed of a kind of augmented sight. Over and above the luminous and shadowy chaos arose a picture which, though vague, held the elements of consistency and permanence. It was indeed somewhat familiar, for the unusual part was superimposed upon the usual terrestrial scene much as a cinema view may be thrown upon the painted

curtain of a theater. I saw the attic laboratory, the electrical machine, and the unsightly form of Tillinghast opposite me; but of all the space unoccupied by familiar objects not one particle was vacant. Indescribable shapes both alive and otherwise were mixed in disgusting disarray, and close to every known thing were whole worlds of alien, unknown entities. It likewise seemed that all the known things entered into the composition of other unknown things, and vice versa. Foremost among the living objects were inky, jellyish monstrosities which flabbily quivered in harmony with the vibrations from the machine. They were present in loathsome profusion, and I saw to my horror that they *over-lapped*; that they were semi fluid and capable of passing through one another and through what we know as solids. These things were never still, but seemed ever floating about with some malignant purpose. Sometimes they appeared to devour one another, the attacker launching itself at its victim and instantaneously obliterating the latter from sight. Shudderingly I felt that I knew what had obliterated the unfortunate servants, and could not exclude the things from my mind as I strove to observe other properties of the newly visible world that lies unseen around us. But Tillinghast had been watching me, and was speaking.

"You see them? You see them? You see the things that float and flop about you and through you every moment of your life? You see the creatures that form what men call the pure air and the blue sky? Have I not succeeded in breaking down the barrier; have I not shown you worlds that no other living men have seen?" I heard his scream through the horrible chaos, and looked at the wild face thrust so offensively close to mine. His eyes were pits of flame, and they glared at me with what I now saw was overwhelming hatred. The machine droned detestably.

"You think those floundering things wiped out the servants? Fool, they are harmless! But the servants *are* gone, aren't they? You tried to stop me; you discouraged me when I needed every drop of encouragement I could get; you were afraid of the cosmic truth, you damned coward, but now I've got you! What swept up the servants? What made them scream so loud?... Don't know, eh! You'll know soon enough. Look at me—listen to what I say—do you suppose there are really any such things as time and magnitude. Do you fancy there are such things as form or matter. I tell you, I have struck depths that your little brain can't picture. I have seen beyond the bounds of infinity and drawn down demons from the stars.... I have harnessed the shadows

that stride from world to world to sow death and madness.... Space belongs to me, do you hear? Things are hunting me now—the things that devour and dissolve—but I know how to elude them. It is you they will get, as they got the servants.... Stirring, dear sir? I told you it was dangerous to move, I have saved you so far by telling you to keep still—saved you to see more sights and to listen to me. If you had moved, they would have been at you long ago. Don't worry, they won't *hurt* you. They didn't hurt the servants—it was the *seeing* that made the poor devils scream so. My pets are not pretty, for they come out of places where aesthetic standards are—*very different*. Disintegration is quite painless, I assure you—but *I want you to see them*. I almost saw them, but I knew how to stop. You are not curious? I always knew you were no scientist. Trembling, eh. Trembling with anxiety to see the ultimate things I have discovered. Why don't you move, then? Tired? Well, don't worry, my friend, *for they are coming*.... Look, look, curse you, look ... it's just over your left shoulder...."

What remains to be told is very brief, and may be familiar to you from the newspaper accounts. The police heard a shot in the old Tillinghast house and found us there—Tillinghast dead and me unconscious. They arrested me because the revolver was in my hand, but released me in three hours, after they found that it was apoplexy which had finished Tillinghast and saw that my shot had been directed at the noxious machine which now lay hopelessly shattered on the laboratory floor. I did not tell very much of what I had seen, for I feared the coroner would be skeptical; but from the evasive outline I did give, the doctor told me that I had undoubtedly been hypnotised by the vindictive and homicidal madman.

I wish I could believe that doctor. It would help my shaky nerves if I could dismiss what I now have to think of the air and the sky about and above me. I never feel alone or comfortable, and a hideous sense of pursuit sometimes comes chillingly on me when I am weary. What prevents me from believing the doctor is this one simple fact—that the police never found the bodies of those servants whom they say Crawford Tillinghast murdered.

WEIRD WHISPERINGS

by Schwartz & Weisinger

Otis Adelbert Kline died from an operation two years ago!... That is, the doctors declared that he was dead.... Fortunately, an adrenalin injection saved him.... Seabury Quinn's next Jules de Grandin novelette will attempt to justify incest between brother and sister.... Quinn, who gets most of his plots while shaving, is also working on a book-length novel, "a sort of lost world affair".... When A. Merritt finished reading "Thirsty Blades" by Kline and Price, he said, "I wish I had written that story".... *Ten Story Book* edited by Harry Stephen Keeler, once put out an all weird issue.... Robert E. Howard occasionally does boxing yarns for *Sport Stories*.

Farnsworth Wright says the best stories he's printed in *Weird Tales* are (not in the order listed): "The Stranger from Kurdistan" by Price, "The Phantom Farmhouse" by Quinn, "The Outsider" by Lovecraft, "The Werewolf of Ponkert" by Munn, "The Shadow Kingdom" by Howard, "The Canal" by Worrell, "The Wind that Tramps the World" by Owen.... Eli Colter's full name is Elizabeth Colter.... Victor Rousseau's is Victor Rousseau Emanuel.... Murray Leinster's is Will Fitzgerald Jenkins.... Ralph Milne Farley's is Roger Sherman Hoar.... Farnsworth Wright has had several stories and poems published under the nom-de-plume of Francis Hard.... Desmond Hall, associate editor of *Astounding Stories*, admits having had a story published in *Weird Tales* under a pseudonym, but won't divulge which one.

"The Vengeance of Fi Fong," another tale of brain transplantation by Bassett Morgan, will soon appear in *Weird Tales*.... Also scheduled for early appearances are "Old Sledge" by Paul Ernst and "Distortion out of Space" by Francis Flagg.... Otis Adelbert Kline's *Weird Tales* story of some years back, "The Bird People," was based on the *Amazing Stories* Cover Contest.... Jack Williamson wrote "Born of the Sun" after an argument with Edmond Hamilton, in which the former has maintained that no idea was too impossible to make convincing in a story.... Arthur J. Burks began his career in *Weird Tales* under the name of Estil Critchie because, he explains, "I was ashamed of being associated with the stigma of being known as a writer".... An interview with Burks, by your scribes, appeared in the April issue of *Author & Composer*.

E. Hoffmann Price has moved to Oklahoma where he is using his executive ability and mechanical skill as partner in a garage business.... He will soon take to the road in his 1928 Ford Juggernaut and will visit Robert E. Howard in Cross Plains, Texas, and Clark Ashton Smith in Auburn, California.... Farnsworth Wright once gave an account of his pet peeve: "My pet peeve is stories that get the character in a very interesting dilemma and lead the reader to expect an ingenious solution of the story only to have the story end with the statement, 'then he woke up and found it was a dream.' Readers have a right to expect the author will offer an interesting denouement, but instead he says 'April Fool'."

The Little Box

by R. H. Barlow

Annals of the Jinns—7

On the planet called Loth, in the Seventh City, there lived a semi-savage known as Hsuth. He had been captured in his youth by the fearless raiders of Phargo, but popular demand later caused the release of all the beings that once formed an interesting collection of the larger animals. So it was that one might have had for a neighbor anything from one of the reddish parrot-people from the far-away isle of Hin to a pale blue octopus-thing from the dried sea-bed of Innia. Hsuth, it is to be stated, was neither, being merely one of the common-place brown tailed men from Leek. He was, as are most savages, very inquisitive, and one day after returning from the ridna-zat works (wherein were manufactured first class ornaments to be worn in the nose) he espied a small black box in the window of a money-lender—a box whose curious carvings and tightly closed lid brought up many questions. When the dealer refused to open it for him his curiosity was doubly whetted, so that he purchased it (after unavoidable delay and expected haggling) thereby parting with the earnings of a week.

Returning home with his prize he managed to slip past a street-brawl and get inside his house—a three-towered affair resembling an ill-fitted layer cake, each successive story being smaller than the one upon which it reposed.

Bolting the door he then tried to force the lid open. But it resented this move on his part, and showed it by pinching his finger violently. This caused him to fling it against the wall. It came to the floor with a dull thud and the top fell off after a moment's silence. A squeaky voice issued from the interior. "—press the control marked A and the machine will come to him no matter where it is. I am making three boxes similar to this and hope that someone will gain some benefit, for I haven't. Anyone finding this is directed to press the control marked A and the machine will come to him no matter where it is iammakingthree-e-e-E-EEE Yah psuhutthush!" declared

the little box. As Hsuth did not understand what was said, it is to be feared the directions were lost upon him, yet some demon directed his finger to the control marked A. Perhaps it was because all the other buttons were hopelessly jammed into the wood.

Nothing happened, and Hsuth disappointedly threw the box through the window where it landed upon the head of a prominent citizen, causing that worthy unwonted irritation.

And Hsuth forgot about the box and the fraudulent control marked A, not knowing that ten million miles away the machine was battering ceaselessly at its bonds, striving to escape and answer the long-awaited call—which it never quite managed to do.

But the Leerians gathered round with frightened eyes to watch the reanimation of the god of the forefathers on that far continent, and offered up sacrifices in the form of decrepit inhabitants and those who would have had them doubt their deity.

PROSE PASTELS

by Clark Ashton Smith

III. The Muse of Hyperborea

Too far away is her wan and mortal face, and too remote are the snows of her lethal breast, for mine eyes to behold them ever. But at whiles her whisper comes to me, like a chill unearthly wind that is faint from traversing the gulfs between the worlds, and has flown over ultimate horizons of ice-bound deserts. And she speaks to me in a tongue I have never heard but have always known; and she tells of deathly things and of things beautiful beyond the ecstatic desires of love. Her speech is not of good or evil, nor of anything that is desired or conceived or believed by the termites of earth; and the air she breathes, and the lands wherein she roams, would blast like the utter cold of sidereal space; and her eyes would blind the vision of men like suns; and her kiss, if one should ever attain it, would wither and slay like the kiss of lightning.

But, hearing her far, infrequent whisper, I behold a vision of vast auroras, on continents that are wider than the world, and seas too great for the enterprise of human keels. And at times I stammer forth the strange tidings that she brings: though none will welcome them, and none will believe or listen. And in some dawn of the desperate years, I shall go forth and follow where she calls, to seek the high and beautiful doom of her snow-pale distances, to perish amid her indeseccrate horizons.

Tell your friends about TFF

SUPERNATURAL HORROR IN LITERATURE

Part Nine

by **H. P. Lovecraft**

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IV. The Apex of Gothic Romance

Horror in literature attains a new malignity in the work of Matthew Gregory Lewis, (1773-1818) whose novel "The Monk" (1795) achieved marvelous popularity and earned him the nickname of "Monk" Lewis. This young author, educated in Germany and saturated with a body of wild Teuton lore unknown to Mrs. Radcliffe, turned to terror in forms more violent than his gentle predecessor had ever dared to think of, and produced as a result a masterpiece of active nightmare whose general Gothic cast is spiced with added stores of ghoulishness. The story is one of a Spanish monk, Ambrosio, who from a state of over-proud virtue is tempted to the very nadir of evil by a fiend in the guise of the maiden Matilda; and who is finally, when awaiting death at the Inquisition's hands, induced to purchase escape at the price of his soul from the devil, because he deems both body and soul already lost. Forthwith the mocking Fiend snatches him to a lonely place, tells him he has sold his soul in vain since both pardon and a chance for salvation were approaching at the moment of his hideous bargain, and completes the sardonic betrayal by rebuking him for his unnatural crimes, and casting his body down a precipice whilst his soul is borne off forever to perdition. The novel contains some appalling descriptions such as the incantation in the vaults beneath the convent cemetery, the burning of the convent, and the final end of the wretched abbot. In the sub-plot where the Marquis de las Cisternas meets the spectre of his erring ancestress, The Bleeding Nun, there are many enormously potent strokes, notably the visit of the animated corpse to the Marquis's bedside, and the cabalistic ritual whereby the Wandering Jew helps him to fathom and banish his dead tormentor. Nevertheless, "The Monk" drags sadly when read as a whole. It

is too long and too diffuse, much of its potency is marred by flippancy and by an awkwardly excessive reaction against those canons of decorum which Lewis at first despised as prudish. One great thing may be said of the author; that he never ruined his ghostly visions with a natural explanation. He succeeded in breaking up the Radcliffian tradition and expanding the field of the Gothic novel. Lewis wrote much more than "The Monk." His drama, "The Castle Spectre," was produced in 1798, and he later found time to pen other fiction in ballad form—"Tales of Terror," (1799) "Tales of Wonder," (1801) and a succession of translations from Germany.

Gothic romances, both English and German, now appeared in multitudinous and mediocre profusion. Most of them were merely ridiculous in the light of mature taste, and Miss Austen's famous satire "Northanger Abbey" was by no means an unmerited rebuke to a school which had sunk far toward absurdity. This particular school was petering out, but before its final subordination there arose its last and greatest figure in the person of Charles Robert Maturin, (1782-1824) an obscure and eccentric Irish clergyman. Out of an ample body of miscellaneous writing which includes one confused Radcliffian imitation called "The Fatal Revenge; or, The Family of Montorio," (1807) Maturin at length evolved the vivid horror-masterpiece of "Melmoth, the Wanderer," (1820) in which the Gothic tale climbed to altitudes of sheer spiritual fright which it had never known before.

"Melmoth" is the tale of an Irish gentleman who, in the seventeenth century, obtained a preternaturally extended life from the Devil at the price of his soul. If he can persuade another to take the bargain off his hands, and assume his existing state, he can be saved; but this he can never manage to effect, no matter how assiduously he haunts those whom despair has made reckless and frantic. The framework of the story is very clumsy; involving tedious length, digressive episodes, narratives within narratives, and laboured dovetailing and coincidences; but at various points in the endless rambling, there is felt a pulse of power undiscoverable in any previous work of this kind—a kinship to the essential truth of human nature, an understanding of the profoundest sources of actual cosmic fear, and a white heat of sympathetic passion on the writer's part, which makes the book a true document of aesthetic self-expression rather than a mere clever compound of artifice. No unbiased reader can doubt that with "Melmoth" an enormous stride in the evolution of the horror-tale is represented. Fear is

taken out of the realm of the conventional and exalted into a hideous cloud over mankind's very destiny. Maturin's shudders, the work of one capable of shuddering himself, are of the sort that convince. Mrs. Radcliffe and Lewis are fair game for the parodist, but it would be difficult to find a false note in the feverishly intensified action and high atmospheric tension of the Irishman whose less sophisticated emotions and strain of Celtic mysticism gave him the finest possible natural equipment for his task. Without a doubt, Maturin is a man of authentic genius, and he was so recognized by Balzac, who grouped "Melmoth" with Moliere's "Don Juan," Goethe's "Faust," and Byron's "Manfred" as the supreme allegorical figures of modern European literature, and wrote a whimsical piece called "Melmoth Reconciled," in which the Wanderer succeeds in passing his infernal bargain on to a Parisian bank defaulter, who in turn hands it along a chain of victims, until a gambler dies with it in his possession, and by his damnation ends the curse. Scott, Rossetti, Thackeray and Baudelaire are other titans who gave Maturin their unqualified admiration, and there is much significance in the fact that Oscar Wilde, after his disgrace and exile, chose for his last days in Paris the assumed name of "Sebastian Melmoth."

(continued next month)

WITHIN THE CIRCLE

by F. Lee Baldwin

Two different issues of *Weird Tales* are labelled Volume 19, Number 3. (Look on Index Page.)

E. Hoffmann Price is touring the Southwest and is planning to call on Robert E. Howard, dip into Mexico, stop at Clark Ashton Smith's and finally wind up in San Francisco. His beloved rugs are with him.

"The Curse of Yig" by Zealia Brown Reed has been reprinted in the S & B (London) "Not at Night" anthology a few years ago.

Forrest Ackerman on binding stf: "—Place together evenly all pages to be bound into one booklet; with thumbtack, press two holes thru pages, holes

being as far apart as the wire clips removed from original copies of magazines containing the stories or parts of serial; push clip thru these two holes near top of magazine and bend together at back, then repeating operation near bottom. Story is now clipped together. Backs and covers can now easily be put on by use of adhesive paper.—Does that help you?"

"The Horror in the Museum," by Hazel Heald is scheduled for reprinting this year.

Here's one about Edgar Allan Poe: Mrs. Whitman, poetess, suggested that Poe remove the last stanza from his poem "Ulalume" as she thought it detracted from the work. He did, and there are very few of the younger Poe admirers who have seen it. Modern standard Editions don't contain this bit; it is only the older ones that do.

Howard Wandrei, Don's brother, is a weird painter of the most unusual order. His work is far beyond that of any weird illustrator employed by magazines, in my opinion.... Have a look some time you Editors who want to be surprised! Howard illustrated Donald's "Dark Odyssey."

Here are the stories in the "Randolph Carter Series" by H. P. Lovecraft. They were written as follows: "Statement of Randolph Carter" (1919), "The Silver Key" (1926), "The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath" (1926-7, unpublished), and the collaboration with E. Hoffmann Price, "Through the Gates of the Silver Key".... "At the Mountains of Madness" was written in the Spring of 1931 and "The Shadow over Innsmouth" was written in November of the same year. His latest tale is "The Thing on the Doorstep" written in August, 1933.

For those who would like to read some of the classics of weird fiction try "John Silence" by Algernon Blackwood, "The Willows" by the same author (found in "The Best Ghost Stories" edited by Bohun Lynch), "The Three Imposters" by Arthur Machen (Alfred A. Knopf, Publisher, N. Y.), "The Turn of the Screw" by Henry James (found in "The Two Magics" by the same author), "The White People" by Arthur Machen (found in "The House of Souls" published by Alfred A. Knopf), and "Portrait of a Man With Red Hair" by Hugh Walpole (found in a public library).

SCIENCE FICTION IN ENGLISH MAGAZINES

Series Six

by Bob Tucker

Volume 1, numbers 12, 13, 14 and 15, of *Scoops* contains a great variety of stf. "The Humming Horror" (interplanetary); "The Black Vultures" (air pirates); "Devilman of the Deep" (sea monster); "Cataclysm" (another Armageddon, with the survivors going to Mars); "The Poison Belt" (Sir Arthur Conan-Doyle's tale); "Scouts of Space" (interplanetary space pirates); "The Metal Dictator" (robot ruler plot); "The March of the Beserks" (scientist creates monsters who revolt); "Invaders from Time" (time travelling tale by our own John Russell Fearn); and "S O S from Saturn" (interplanetary).

In addition, *Scoops* maintains several departments, and a readers page, among which are: "To the Planets," a weekly column by P. E. Cleator, who is President of the British Interplanetary Society. This column reports latest news flashes of rocketeers and interplanetary projects all over the world. Two other departments called "Here's a Scoop" and "Modern Marvels" list the latest inventions, scientific discoveries, etc. Another column, "Can it be Done?" presents an illustration of some badly needed device or invention, and asks readers to try to invent them. The readers page occupies the back cover at present and quite a few good arguments are put up. It needs some American letters though, so get busy Mr. Ackerman and Mr. Darrow!

Several requests have been received for information on this magazine, so here it is: *Scoops* is published weekly at 18 Henrietta St., London, WC2, England. Yearly subscription price is 13s, or about \$3.40. Remittance can be made in American postal money orders. English money values are not steady, in regards to American money, so the \$3.40 may be either more, or less, when you subscribe. *Scoops* contains, on an average, 28 pages. It has a cover in two or three colors, depicting some scene from a story, or some scientific feat. The size of the magazine is 9 X 12 inches, and has small type, thus quite a lot of reading matter is put out, considering its small price of about 6 cents for a copy.

You can either subscribe for three months, six months, or a year. The three month price is three shillings and three pence. Six months is just double

that. One year is 13 shillings. [We hope to present another article in this series very soon. Perhaps even as early as next month.]

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Wonder Stories

BELOW THE PHOSPHOR

by Robert Nelson

The swaying corpse upon the wall
Grows rotten with the waning light;
And crawling shadows of the night
Lie on the body like a pall.

Dead spirits dance upon the slope;
Blatant are bat-things overhead;
But now the revenants have fled,
The glad fantasias yet grope.

Only the ghouls are gently stirred
By tainted gusts lost from the gale;
And in the faun-infested vale
Wild screeches of a fiend are heard.

Impending o'er the noisome spawn,
In glaucous haze the Phosphor steals—
Thence to Azrael's eyes reveals
The wrestling wraiths on death's dark lawn—

Fast scaling up the ebon sky
To cull and slay the gnawing blight,
All cool of the corpse's mute delight,
Or if the baneful fiend should die.

THE FAVORITE WEIRD TALES OF AUGUST W. DERLETH

(Courtesy of H. Koenig)

The Willows	A. Blackwood
The Inhabitant of Carcosa	A. Bierce
The Yellow Sign	R. W. Chambers
The Upper Berth	F. Marion Crawford
The Monkey's Paw	W. W. Jacobs
A View from a Hill	M. R. James
Seaton's Aunt	W. de la Mare
The House of Sounds	M. P. Shiel
Dream of Armageddon	H. G. Wells
Shadows on the Wall	Mary E. Wilkins Freeman

YOUR VIEWS

[Readers are invited to make free use of this department. However, we must ask you to be brief, due to the limited space available.]

"If the devil suddenly materialized, horns, tail, hooves, brimstone and all, sneaking in at the midnight hour and sat down beside one of us ordinary disbelieving mortals—well, that's my own idea of a good weird story! Most stories react upon one rather distantly. They communicate merely a distant mental fear, and not a physical fear. If I were to choose the most entertaining book I have ever read, I would unquestionably name 'Seven Footprints to Satan' by A. Merritt. Just as unhesitatingly I would name him as the insuperable weird writer, since I have never experienced the physical fleshly cowardice of the preternatural, either in actual life or in imaginative

reconstruction of fiction, more vividly than when I contacted Lucifer in person in that book. What is the best weird fiction narrative ever penned? Vote one from yours truly goes to 'Seven Footprints to Satan'."—J. Harvey Haggard

"Seabury Quinn is my favorite author for his clever little brain-child, Jules de Grandin. Bless his li'l heart—the monsieur can combine humor with work before one can bat an eyelash. Pouff!—the mystery is solved. The very manner the author uses in his writings suits me best of all—one is held in suspense until almost the end when a few brief explanations solve the whole riddle."—Gertrude Hemken.

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