

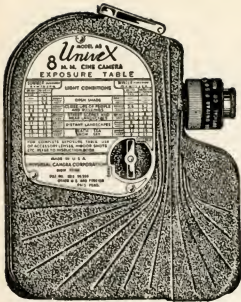
AMATEUR CORRESPONDENT

MAY - JUNE
1937



Dedication

This issue is respectfully dedicated to the memory of Howard Phillips Lovecraft, who died March 15, 1937, at the age of forty-six. Called by many the dean of modern writers of weird fiction, he will be mourned by every reader of fantasy, not only for the excellence of his writings but also for the fine calibre of mind typified therein.



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AMATEUR CORRESPONDENT

"The Magazine for the Amateur Fantasy-Writer"

CORWIN F. STICKNEY

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FRANK S. BOGERT

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METAMORPHOSIS



An Editorial

YOU LOOK at this issue of the Correspondent, and if you are not a new reader, you are quite surprised at what you see.

The most striking innovation is the change in size, which, we are certain, will prove agreeable to all. But many more benefits will result from this change than the majority of you realize. The average reader thinks only of the more attractive format an increased size makes possible; and he is perfectly right as far as he goes. But he usually misses the most important point entirely: *increased size means increased advertising power.*

You say: Increased advertising power---so what?

We say: Increased advertising power spells certain success in the accomplishment of everything on our program, for advertising is the backbone of any magazine---from the most insignificant of the "pulp" to the largest, most influential "slick". Increased advertising power means that we shall be able to give you the Correspondent once a month, print it on a better, more substantial grade of book paper, have a new cover design each issue, and make many more quite noticeable improvements in size and format. Therefore, you can see that we have assumed our new dimensions with an eye to more than appearance and convenience.

You are perhaps wondering about the change of name from *Science-Fantasy Correspondent* to *Amateur Correspondent*. Our chief reason is that the new title is more precisely descriptive of the magazine as you will find it in issues to come.

You see, we are striving to get more and more *reader interest* in the Correspondent. Practically everyone who has had any editing experience will tell you that this can be obtained only by infusing more variety into the magazine---hence the inception of *Hobbyana*, the recent change of editorial policy, and now the new title.

The substitution of the word, *Amateur*, for *Science-Fantasy* in that title means simply that we shall hereafter use a more generalized type of material than in previous issues. This does not necessarily imply that we are gradually dropping the fantasy element from our make-up, to finally abandon it altogether; we intend to continue featuring it, mainly by encouraging and furthering the cause of the amateur fantasy-writer.

However, if we are to do this, we must have the support of every amateur author in our audience.

Frankly, we are looking for "discoveries"---talented unknowns, so to

speak---in our reader-ranks; and the only way we can tell if you are one of these is by seeing some of your writings. Our aim is to help you by giving these writings, if they are at all worthwhile, to the public through the medium of the *Correspondent*. Experienced critics read this magazine, and you may be sure that they will be quick to recognize the slightest promise of literary talent when they see it.

As another aid to aspiring authors, we plan to present in each issue an article on the how and why of fantasy writing, by some acknowledged expert in the field. In this month's contribution by the late H. P. Lovecraft you should find many interesting and helpful ideas. Write in, won't you, and tell us if you think the idea is worth continuing? We shall most certainly abide by your decision, for if you disapprove of them, such articles constitute just so much squandered space.

We're making progress; your reception of the third issue shows that. The numerous letters we've received give almost unanimous approval to our new policy; one reader has aptly expressed it by stating that the *Correspondent* is now a magazine with a purpose other than cluttering up the already overcrowded field of fan publications. However, for *Hit 'N' Run* we mainly want letters criticising individually our authors' efforts; and we must specify that such criticisms are to be constructive and above mere withering satire and destructive irony. If you want to be of real aid to us, let's see what you can do in that line!

By the way, the new cuts in this issue make a great improvement in our appearance, don't they? If we don't appear too conceited, we might say also that we're especially proud of that cover, which, in our opinion, is Virgil Finlay's best drawing to date. But much of the credit for its neatness and fine design must go to Mr. George Gregor, who manufactures all of our cuts, and whose advertisement appears regularly in *The Correspondent Advertiser*. He does a really skilled job, and we are pleased to recommend him to any of you who might wish to have such work done at reasonable rates.

This issue has come to you with many improvements, made possible solely by your subscriptions and advertisements. But we can go only as far as you are willing to go with us; and though we have far indeed to go before we reach our limits, we can make gradual and continued progress if you will lend a hand, those of you who have not as yet subscribed, by sending in your quarters at the earliest possible occasion, and all of you, by patronizing our advertisers. If you will do this, *every one of you*, we can continue building toward success. If you are not sufficiently interested to cooperate, we shall certainly fail. In short, the fate of the *Correspondent* is entirely in your hands.

We're sure you want us to be successful.

The Sage of College Street

By

E. Hoffmann Price

Mr. Price wrote the following partial biography some time before H. P. Lovecraft's untimely death, and it may therefore be considered a truly sincere reflection of the respect and admiration held for him by all who were familiar with his writings.

HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT, affectionately referred to by thousands of fans as "H. P. L.", *par excellence*, is not the cadaverous and ghoulish creature that these admirers visualize. During the several times that I had the pleasure of his company, first as host, then guest, I was too interested in his striking personality to be accurately observing as to his outward appearance; but as I recollect, HPL is around 5 feet 11, and inclined to be spare and angular of face and figure.

His greying hair was until recently dark; and New England ancestry leads one to anticipate blue or grey eyes. Here is the first upset: *brown* eyes peer from a face that gains determination from a long jaw and a chin which, while not conspicuously square, is far from pointed.

HPL, with just the suggestion of a scholarly stoop, walks with a quick, nervous stride that somehow seems to be cadenced to his animated conversation. It takes good legs to keep pace with him.

His speech would identify him as the author of any of his works. He selects his words with the same exactness and precision that mark his written expression; and lest you think that this must sound bookish, let me say that such is not the case. It is so natural, so inevitable and effortless, this somewhat formal and scholarly diction, that it would be an affectation and a letdown if he expressed himself in any other way; and yet, with amazing aptness, he occasionally lends a pungent touch by an interlarding of a slangy colloquialism.

Bookish? Hell no! Learned diction is so easily under the command of his vivacious manner and cordiality that the "pompous professor" is utterly absent: and that is perhaps a keynote---HPL does not assay a trace of the lecture room, even though there is scarcely an artistic or cultural subject on which he cannot learnedly hold forth, and with an unflinching grip on the attention of the listener.

His hobbies? This is not a catalogue; let me short-circuit that by saying that the range must be from astronomy to zoology. Or perhaps I should have started with architecture; for during one afternoon's motoring we covered the architectural high-lights of southern Rhode Island, after having hoofed it down many of the charming old streets of Providence.

HPL neither smokes nor goes out for alcoholic drinks, but he has always been tolerant of my vices; perhaps because we both have such a deep admiration and appreciation of that most civilized creature, the cat. Much as he enjoys interminable arguments on literary technique, a discussion of the *felidae* is always the signal for a truce.

Genealogy, archeology, history, astronomy and geography are among his favorite studies, and as a bibliophile, there are none more enthusiastic.

Ice cream, I believe, is HPL's favorite dissipation. He is a connoisseur, and offhand, is familiar with at least a score of varieties. Sea food, on the other hand, is his pet aversion; and after finding me the best clam chowder in Providence, he retired out of smelling distance of the loathsome repast I enjoyed. But in other fields we see each other eye to eye: blistering hot and blighting *chili con carne*, East Indian curry that would raise welts on a pack saddle, and devastating coffee, night-black and strong enough to tan an ox-hide, are among his greatest gustatory delights.

But most striking of his talents is his ability to go without sleep. After a 48-hour session of sightseeing and conversation, I gratefully collapsed to pound my ear; and when I awoke, 8 hours later, I found HPL still at his desk, industriously writing up notes on our trip. A man of unhuman and uncanny endurance, this HPL, doubtless the heritage of the Elder Ones. There is but one thing beyond his fortitude--enduring temperatures below 75 or 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Hence, perhaps, our heated debates; which I hope to resume at four o'clock some morning when the moon casts a ghastly light over his favorite graveyard in Providence!



NOTES ON WRITING WEIRD FICTION

By

H. P. Lovecraft

THE REASON I write stories is to give myself the satisfaction of visualising more clearly and detailedly and stably the vague, elusive, fragmentary impressions of wonder, beauty, and adventurous expectancy which are conveyed to me by certain sights (scenic, architectural, etc.), ideas, occurrences, and images encountered in art and literature. I choose weird stories because they suit my inclination most--one of my strongest and most persistent wishes being to achieve, momentarily, the illusion of some strange suspension or violation of the galling limitations of time, space, and natural law which forever imprison us and frustrate our curiosity about the infinite cosmic spaces beyond the radius of our sight and analysis. These stories frequently emphasise the element of horror because fear is our deepest and strongest emotion, and the one which best lends itself to the creation of nature-defying illusions. Horror and the unknown or the strange are always closely connected, so that it is hard to create a convincing picture of shat-

tered natural law or cosmic alienage or "outsideness" without laying stress on the emotion of fear. The reason why *time* plays a great part in so many of my tales is that this element looms up in my mind as the most profoundly dramatic and grimly terrible thing in the universe. *Conflict with time* seems to me the most patent and fruitful theme in all human expression.

While my chosen form of story-writing is obviously a special and perhaps a narrow one, it is none the less a persistent and permanent type of expression, as old as literature itself. There will always be a certain small percentage of persons who feel a burning curiosity about unknown outer space, and a burning desire to escape from the prison-house of the known and real into those enchanted lands of incredible adventure and infinite possibilities which dreams open up to us, and which things like deep woods, fantastic urban towers and flaming sunsets momentarily suggest. These persons include great authors as well as insignificant amateurs like myself--Dunsany, Poe, Arthur Machen, M. R. James, Algernon Blackwood, and Walter de la Mare being typical masters in this field.

AS TO how I write a story--there is no one way. Each one of my tales has a different history. Once or twice I have literally written out a dream; but usually I start with a mood or idea which I want to express, and revolve it in my mind until I can think of a good way of embodying it in some chain of dramatic occurrences capable of being recorded in concrete terms. I tend to run through a mental list of the basic conditions or situations best adapted to such a mood or idea or image, and then begin to speculate on logical and naturally activated explanations of the given mood or idea or image in terms of the basic condition or situation chosen.

The actual process of writing is of course as varied as the choice of theme and initial conception; but if the history of all my tales were analysed, it is just possible that the following set of rules might be deduced from the *average* procedure:

1. Prepare synopsis or scenario of events in order of *occurrence*--not order of narration. Describe with enough fulness to cover all vital points and motivate all incidents planned. Details, comments, and estimates of consequences are sometimes desirable in this temporary framework.
2. Prepare a second synopsis and scenario of events--this one in order of *narration* (not actual occurrence), with ample fulness and detail, and with notes as to changing perspective, stresses, and climax. Change original synopsis to fit if such a change will increase the dramatic force or general effectiveness of the story. Interpolate or delete incidents at will--never being bound by your original conception even if the ultimate result be a tale wholly different from that first planned. Let additions and alterations be made whenever suggested by anything in the formulating process.
3. Write out the story--rapidly, fluently, and not too critically--following the *second* or narrative-order synopsis. Change incidents and

plot whenever the developing process seems to suggest such change, never being bound by any precious design. If the development suddenly reveals new opportunities for dramatic effect or vivid storytelling, add whatever is thought advantageous---going back and reconciling the early parts to the new plan. Insert or delete whole sections if necessary or desirable, trying different beginnings and endings until the best is found. But be sure that all references throughout the story are thoroughly reconciled with the final design. Remove all possible superfluities---words, sentences, paragraphs, or whole episodes or elements---observing the usual precautions about the reconciliation of all references.

4. Revise the entire text, paying attention to vocabulary, syntax, rhythm of prose, proportioning of parts, niceties of tone, grace and convincingness of transitions (scene, slow and detailed action to rapid and sketchy time-covering action and vice versa. . . etc., etc., etc.), effectiveness of beginning, ending, climaxes, etc., dramatic suspense and interest, plausibility and atmosphere, and various other elements.
5. Most of all---prepare a neatly typed final copy.

THE FIRST of these stages is often purely a mental one---a set of conditions and happenings being worked out in my head, and never set down until I am ready to prepare a detailed synopsis of events in order of narration. Then, too, I sometimes begin even the actual writing before I know how I shall develop the idea---this beginning forming a problem to be motivated and exploited.

There are, I think, four distinct types of *weird story*: one expressing a *mood or feeling*, another expressing a *pictorial conception*, a third expressing a *general situation, condition, legend, or intellectual conception*, and a fourth explaining a definite tableau or specific dramatic situation or climax. In another way, weird tales may be grouped into two rough categories---those in which the marvel or horror concerns some *condition or phenomenon*, and those in which it concerns some *action of persons* in connection with a bizarre condition or phenomenon.

Each weird story---to speak more particularly of the horror type---seems to involve five definite elements: (a) some basic, underlying horror or abnormality---condition, entity, etc., (b) the general effects or bearings of the horror, (c) the mode of manifestation---object embodying the horror and phenomena observed---, (d) the types of fear-reaction pertaining to the horror, and (e) the special effects of the horror in relation to the given conditions.

In writing a weird story I always try very carefully to achieve the right mood and atmosphere, and place the emphasis where it belongs. One cannot, except in immature pulp charlatan-fiction, present an account of impossible, improbable, or inconceivable phenomena as a commonplace narration of objective acts and conventional emotions. Inconceivable events and conditions

have a special handicap to overcome, and this can be accomplished only through the maintenance of a careful realism in every phase of the story *except* that touching on the one given marvel. This marvel must be treated very impressively and deliberately---with a careful emotional "build-up"---else it will seem flat and unconvincing. Being the principal thing in the story, its mere existence should overshadow the characters and events. But the characters and events must be consistent and natural except where they touch the single marvel. In relation to the central wonder, the characters should show the same overwhelming emotion which similar characters would show toward such a wonder in real life. Never have a wonder taken for granted. Even when the characters are supposed to be accustomed to the wonder I try to weave an air of awe and impressiveness corresponding to what the reader should feel. A casual style ruins any serious fantasy. Atmosphere, not action, is the main desirable characteristic. Indeed, all that a wonder story can ever be is a *vivid picture of a certain type of human mood*. The moment it tries to be anything else it becomes cheap, puerile, and unconvincing. Prime emphasis should be given to *subtle suggestion*---imperceptible hints and touches of selective assertative detail which express shadings of moods and build up a vague illusion of the strange reality of the unreal. Avoid bold catalogues of incredible happenings which can have no substance or meaning apart from a sustaining cloud of colour and symbolism.

THE JEST OF TIANNE

By

Robert F. Ennis

Suggested by the Story, "Princess of the Stars", in Our Last Issue

WHEN SMITH LANGE'S eyes opened from dream packed slumber, his first thought was that he was still dreaming. His second was that he was insane.

Truly, he was justified in the latter conviction. Insanity was the *only* explanation of such an awakening; the only explanation which could occur to this young man of the twentieth century. To his conservative mind it was impossible that a place such as this could exist; but since he was unable to prove to himself that it did *not* exist, he must therefore be insane.

So he vaguely reasoned as he sat up and looked about the immense, luxuriously furnished chamber, as he dazedly fingered the fine texture of the unfamiliar kingly robes which cloaked him. A deep, rich purple was the predominant color in this place; such were his robes; such were the jewelled mosaics which ran all along the long walls; such were the couches set against

these walls and the one on which he sat. Soft shafts of light from an orange sun pierced the glasslike metal of the vaulted roof, lent a touch of fantastic beauty to the alien setting.

The first object to meet his gaze was a great, sapphire-studded throne, thickly cushioned and gorgeous almost to the point of lavishness, set upon a plush-carpeted dais. He started toward it; then something in the ease with which he moved caught his attention and stopped him. Half-anticipating what he would see, he brought up his hands and looked at them, fearfully.

What he saw forced a despairing moan from his lips. *Those were not his hands!* He tore the heavy robes from his body, bared his chest. *This was not his body!* He had never even seen it before!

"I am mad," he told himself aloud. "I must be mad."

A soft, feminine laugh flung from the shadows across the room, floated up to him, its liquid tones exquisitely sweet and at the same time sardonic and mocking. Some unfathomable impulse held him from whirling round to face the intruder; instead, he merely stood there, too dazed to do anything but absorb the rich beauty of her voice.

Again she laughed, shortly; then spoke. The words came and pierced the purple hazes that swirled in his mind---came in deadening, dreamlike regularity and impinged hatefully on his consciousness.

"You are awake, I see. That is good." In themselves, the words were simple enough; yet it seemed to Smith that their syllables were veined with subtle evil and hidden, loathsome intent. Growing subconsciously accustomed to the air of strangeness that pervaded everything in the place, he did not pause even to wonder how he could comprehend her curious, lisping speech, so unlike any that he knew.

"Why don't you face me?" inquired the voice; and as he complied: "Ah, you wear your body well. Come to me!"

He peered into the shadows whence came the imperious tones; stepped cautiously toward them.

"Where are you?" he called. "I cannot see you."

"I'm here---beside you," was the languorous answer.

And though he could not see her, a sudden scent of jasmine and a light pressure upon his arm confirmed her presence. His thoughts were chaotic, half-formed things as he swept the invisible creature into his arms, pressed unseen lips, that were delightfully fragrant, to his own.

With the kiss, she materialized. Indescribably glorious green eyes looked questingly into his, seemed to search his very soul. He thought they mocked him, that the fires which lurked within them were faintly contemptuous, and made as if to hurl her from him. But suddenly he seemed to see an unwilling light of sincerity---of love, almost---stealing into them, and he kissed her again, fiercely.

"Who---*what* are you?" he gasped, at last, forcing her to look into his face. "What are you that you can come and disappear at will? How

am I in this strange place? *Whence came this body that I wear?*"

Her eyes hardened. "I am the sorceress, Tianne," she replied, steadily, in her oddly soft voice, so dangerously lulling. "You are here because I wished to bring you here, and for no other reason; otherwise, you would yet be a man of that disgusting period you term the 'twentieth century', would still be chained to that revolting future era called the 'Machine Age'. I provided your new body. Does it displease you?"

He could not answer her. His whole being seemed drawn into the green depths of her eyes; her voice was frighteningly fascinating, and he could not shake off the hateful hypnotism that inexorably drew its net about him. His mind swam sluggishly and the will of Tianne became his will.

"Does your body displease you?" she persisted, noting his fixed, passive expression and glazed eyes. "Are you not happier here---with me?"

"I am indeed content," responded Smith dully. "Life with you is infinitely preferable to that other, drab existence."

"You love me," she prompted with quiet eagerness.

"Yes," he replied. "I should lay down my life for you, if necessary."

A DAY, a week, a month passed; Smith lost all sense of time. His love for Tianne became very real, and realizing that therein lay sufficient protection, she released him from her hypnotic control.

Often he would kiss her, utterly overcome by the provocative fragrance of her presence, then would say to her, savagely,

"Oh, how I hate you!"

And she would turn those mocking green eyes upon him, would laugh her maddening little laugh, and remind him,

"But you kissed me; is that--hatred?"

"No, damn you--you know it isn't!" Then he would subside somewhat, would become earnest and pleading, and his voice would be pained and sad. "Oh, Tianne, why are you so cruel? You're so beautiful, so lovely---and yet so wanton and sinful! You're evil incarnate, and I should kill you where you stand---but I love you, and I can't---I can't----"

She would smile in quiet amusement, and the taunting fires in her eyes would dance still higher. But somehow it seemed to him that the smile was artificial, and that those green flames masked---love! Unwilling, suppressed love, perhaps--but love, nevertheless. And when she reminded him that he had the power to return to his own time whenever he wished, and resume his normal life, some wild, unreasonable hope flared within him, and he knew that he could never leave. . . .

BUT ONE DAY Tianne broke. She came to Smith, and all the cruelty and evil had fled from her sea-green eyes. She clung to him frantically. She said:

"Oh, I know I should not love you, Smith Lange. I know in my heart that I should not. I try to hate you, to despise you; and often I have tried to force myself to kill you. Several times I have come very close to doing it." She hesitated; then her features softened, became exquisitely delicate,

and her eyes grew suddenly wistful. "But something---something always holds me back, and I cannot. I love you, Smith."

He kissed her, again and again. He breathed, passionately:

"Tianne!" And again, dwelling caressingly upon the beauty of the syllables, "Oh, Tianne! To live here with you, forever---it will be Paradise!"

Sudden fear seemed to strike into her eyes; made of them two frozen seas that mirrored horror. She shrank from him.

"No, Smith! No! You must go back---I must return you to your own time and people. I must---I must----"

He held her, fiercely. "Why?" he cried, savagely, his voice pierced with incredulous pain. "Why must I go? Did you lie when you said you love me? Are you mocking me, even now? If you are----"

"Stop!"

Her eyes snapped, as uncontrollable hatred flooded them---and disappeared as swiftly as it had come.

"You were hurting me," she explained, half-accusingly, half-apologetically, holding her bruised arm. But the hate-fires had not entirely subsided; they seemed to smoulder menacingly behind the penitent glance she gave him.

He looked at her curiously. "I'm sorry," he said. "I can't understand you, Tianne. You say you love me, and then----"

"Oh, Smith," she broke in impulsively, "can't you see? Don't you understand that I must send you back for your own sake---that if you stay, someday the innate cruelty in me will overcome our love and force me to kill you? Even now, much as I love you, it is surging within me, whispering to me to----"

She stopped abruptly; the delicate lines of her face appeared to harden, and a cold, calculating glitter came into her treacherous green eyes.

"You have no choice, Smith Lange," she went on. "If you will not let me send you through time of your own will, there is always---hypnotism."

"It won't work," he said with forced quietness. "I won't go back. Even hypnotism won't win for you."

She gazed at him intently. She said, in a queer, far-away voice:

"I'm sorry, Smith. Forgive me---I can't help what I'm doing. Please try to understand. Maybe, someday----"

Her features swirled before his eyes. He was suddenly very tired and weak and dizzy. He realized vaguely what was happening to him: that he should fight the overpowering sleep. But he couldn't; and he succumbed at last to the inviting dream-fogs that swirled in his brain.

There was no reality. All was dream, illusion.

So ran the thoughts of Smith Lange when his eyes were at last able to penetrate the blackness about him. He felt curiously weak and numb, and his body lay on something flat, and hard, and cold. He wondered where he was. It was almost, he thought, like---like---a tomb!

He tried to leap up, to see if it were true. In his weakness he fell back,

sick with nausea. Panic flooded his mind, and in the deathly quiet his racing thoughts seemed audible. The tingling of a million nerves made him feel afire, and all he could do was lay there and wait---and wait----

He could bear it no longer. Against the protests of his strangely flaccid muscles he painfully drew his hand to his face.

What was that he felt? The hand recoiled from the gummy material as sudden, paralyzing memory smote him. The cerecloth---used for the wrapping of embalmed bodies----

There was no reality. All was dream, illusion.

He felt that he must be insane. His laughter was a nightmare sound---dry, dead, harsh. He ripped the cloth from his face, heeding not that sticky shreds of it clung to his fingers. Recklessly, he threw his body upward into the gloom, unconscious of all pain. He knew now where he was.

With superhuman strength he hurled back the massive lid above him; stepped out into the tiny vault. The cold, clean air struck him with almost material force, made him stagger; then the life-giving oxygen had effect, and he felt suddenly light and---wispy!

Wispy! He half-ran, half-stumbled out of the place, into the night---under the stars. Wispy! He ripped away the strange clothing, discordant sobs racking him; focused his strangely sunken, watery eyes upon his body.

He fairly swooned *This---his body? No---oh, no!*

Brown, dead, withered, mummified flesh that flaked even before his eyes. He cracked. He laughed wildly, madly. He shouted to the star-strewn blackness above:

"You were clever, Tianne! Clever! A marvelous jest; see---even I laugh!"

And he ran from the graveyard---ran, his wispy, withered form looming weirdly in the night---ran, his rheumy eyes glaring insanely in unseeing trance.

"I laugh, Tianne! A marvelous jest!"

He entered a densely wooded forest, hesitating not at all in his headlong flight. Almost miraculously he threaded his way among the trees, alternately crying and laughing incoherently. He halted only when his rapidly disintegrating body refused to carry him farther; threw himself down near the bank of a tiny stream. For a long while he lay there on the ground, shaking convulsively.

At last he gained some measure of self-control; forced himself to think cohesively. From that of insanity his mood passed to one of brooding sorrow.

"Oh, Tianne---why did you do this thing? Can it be," he reasoned aloud, "that the evil of you overrode even our love, forced you to return me to my own time, though you knew all the while that my spirit would enter my entombed body and that there would be---this?"

He buried his pitted face in skeletal hands, squirmed closer to the water's edge. Finally he forced himself to look at the horror he knew he would find mirrored therein.

He gazed long, shuddered, and tore his gaze away; his face raised to the stars that laughed from above. He said, softly:

"I forgive, Tianne. I forgive. Maybe, someday---after death-----"

There was only the tiniest ripple as the waters of the stream closed over his brown, half-decomposed body. . . .

The Spirits Mourn

By

Willis Conover, Jr.

*Macabre ghosts join hands and dance
Around the grave of one departed—
A lunatic, forlorn, downhearted.
To searing flame his soul does prance.*

*The spirits cease. One kneels and pants:
"Return! Return!" But he has started;
To endless pain his soul has darted.
The spirits mourn in silent trance.*



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And a Much-improved Correspondent



In this department you will find interesting comments and criticisms, representative of how the Correspondent is received by its readers. Though we cannot undertake to print all the letters we get, because of their very number, we cordially invite you to send in your opinions, be they in the form of praise or just good old "knock-'em-down-drag-'em-out" brickbats. Each letter will be given our most careful and conscientious consideration, and we shall answer personally those offering most helpful suggestions and criticisms. Let's hear from you!

Harold F. Benson starts us off on the right foot by hitting away--hard. From West Warwick, Rhode Island, he writes: "I have just received the March-April issue of the Correspondent. What have you done to it? It is nothing like the preceding issues. I want a fan magazine for news of what's happening in the world of fantasy fiction--for instance, what new stories have been bought by the magazines, what new tales the authors have underway, what new books are being published, etc., etc., etc. . . . Fantasy Magazine had these departments, and you did in the January-February number. I hope that your new policy as set forth in your current issue will be changed. I understand that you cannot afford stories by professional writers, but a fan magazine doesn't need them. The magazines on the newsstands carry all that we need. Let's have bigger and better departments and articles."

In direct contrast comes this encouraging letter from Joseph Hatch, of Lawrence, Kansas: "After reading the March-April issue of the Correspondent I wish to offer a few words of praise for Robert A. Madle's and Philip Sutter's very interesting stories. Both authors show great promise. Mr. Sutter, especially, writes with a fascinating style and liberal imagination that, I think, exceeds certain contemporaries in the weird and scientific fields. . . . Oliver E. Saari's article is a great piece of writing, comparable in some ways to the works of Jeans and Eddington. And, quite possibly, Alexis Carrel. Along with those attributes it proved comprehensive enough for anyone in its simple presentation. . . . The acrostics were well worthy of praise. . . . Am hoping you're receiving a lot of usable material in answer to your editorial. Who knows how many

authors you'll start on their journey to the stars with your policy: You'll really be filling a place that's long been needed in the sf. and weird field. There's potential talent, I'd venture to say, in just about ninety-nine per cent. of those readers who take an actual interest in either field; but the percentage who eventually "deliver the goods" are those who in some way receive some, no matter how small, encouragement. . . . I presented such an idea to *Wonder Stories* several years ago, but they were unwilling to heed. So, in reality, the *Correspondent* is rather exclusive. . . ."

Sam Moskowitz, of Newark, New Jersey, contributes the following brief and pointed comment: "In the March-April issue I liked Madle's story. I've only read three by him, but he's a comer. Saari detailed the only interesting science article I've ever read in a fan magazine. Philip Sutter's story, in my opinion, was good enough to have garnered an acceptance from *Weird Tales*. Needless to say, I liked Lovecraft's and Barlow's poetry."

Writes J. Vernon Shea, Jr., from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: "Congratulations on the March-April issue, really one of the finest issues of a fan magazine I have seen. Reading Lovecraft's acrostic was very sad to me, for his death was the greatest shock I have ever experienced. I had been in correspondence with him since 1931. . . . Enclosed find 25c, for which please send me the magazine for a year (a most amazingly generous offer!)."

A FEW WORDS WITH YOU, PLEASE. . . .

Are you a subscriber to the *Correspondent*? If you aren't, may we ask why not? If, in your opinion, we're putting out an interesting and worthwhile magazine, you can best show us that you think so by mailing us your quarters. And if you believe we're doing a poor job, write to *Hit 'N' Run* and tell us where our faults lie. Your letters, regardless of their tone--as long as they are sincere--are enthusiastically welcomed by our editorial staff, and serve as a valuable guide in managing the *Correspondent*.

But more eagerly do we welcome your quarters; for, frankly, they mean our very existence. Most ten-cent magazines charge at least fifty cents for a year's subscription; inasmuch as we rely for the most part on our advertising receipts, we can afford to give you the *Correspondent* at a price that barely covers expenses--but only for as long as you cooperate by taking advantage of this unprecedentedly low rate. If you do not respond, we shall be forced to increase the price to the regular fifty cents, and that is what we least want to do; but, we repeat, this is entirely up to you.

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ODDS AND ENDS

A column containing various communications and acknowledgements which are either too late for insertion in *Hit 'N' Run* or which defy any classification other than the above.

Writes Burton C. Blanchard, of Cornish Flat, New Hampshire: "This is just a line or two to thank you for the copy of the Correspondent that you recently sent me. Also you will find enclosed 25c for a year's subscription. Sorry that I have nothing at present to advertise, as I would like to help you out in that department. In regard to your underlined request for opinions and criticism--first, I note that your magazine is by-lined as an amateur publication. Well, a thorough perusal of its contents convinces me that it is amateur in name only. On the whole, the material and makeup compare favorably with most professional magazines. Of course, the magazine is still in its "infancy"; but it strikes me as being a very healthy child. I believe it can and will be develop'd into a larger magazine in the future. I need not mention that the Finlay cover pleased me greatly. He is a wonderful illustrator and his style is well suited to fantastic and weird stories."

Emrys Evans sends the following concise comment from Mountain Home, Idaho: "The Hobbyana department in your March-April issue was most interesting. Hope you will print more articles on stamps and coins."

R. R. Winterbotham, of Pittsburg, Kansas, postcards: "I find your mag quite interesting. Keep it up!"

Continued on page 27

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Hobbyana



Brother, can you spare a dime? I'd like to get that one for my collection.

Your reaction to this department was surprisingly favorable, and it has become in our eyes a most successful experiment. We hope that the more ardent hobbyists among you will be sufficiently interested to write to our contributors, either in care of this magazine or to their personal addresses. Your letters will be highly appreciated, and will help them greatly in the preparation of their articles.

FIRST DAY COVERS

By

John C. Sidenius

AT A RECENT Hobby show held at Bergenfield, N. J., I overheard two youngsters trying to convince each other of the respective advantages of stamp collecting and cover collecting. One lad was fortunate enough to have some very desirable items for his album which he acquired through his father's mail order business; the other had specialized in First Day Covers of U. S. A. postage, also through the help of his parents—who must have had artistic training, for the few covers he had with him had been made so attractive with a little coloring that I could not restrain myself from asking to inspect them.

The covers were of the recent Hero and the 20c and 50c Clipper Air Mail issues. The cachet as applied had been colored to represent a beautiful miniature picture. I am sure that a non-collector would have admired this work of art and could not have overlooked the fact that it represented a deep interest in cover philately.

There are some who will argue that these cachets distract from the stamp and cancellation, which is the basis for First Day Covers; so here is the point brought out by the youngsters which I thought was worth passing along to you. He said, "When I show my cover album to someone who is not a collector, he looks at the picture first, and then the stamps and the cancellation; so by comparison they understand why the stamp was issued and when."

The other lad finally agreed that the covers were very attractive and got

the idea to make his stamp album more interesting by associating some picture with his stamps; and I left them suggesting the National Geographic Magazine, which had had so many pictures that can be used for this purpose.

As you read this, I expect that the Army and Navy Hero issue will have been completed. Those honored in the Navy were: Jones, Barry, Decatur, MacDonough, Farragut, Porter, Sampson, Dewey, and Schley; while the Army paid tribute to Washington, Greene, Stonewall Jackson, Scott, Sherman, Grant, Sheridan, Lee, and Andrew Jackson. There were some changes made by the addition of General Sheridan on the 3c issue and the bluish-gray color of the 4c issue that caused considerable confusion to those who had prepared their envelopes in advance of official confirmation.

Indignation and protests were heaped upon the heads of the postal department when the portrait of General Lee did not include an additional star on the collar of his uniform. This commission portrays him in a lower rank than was his honor to hold. While rumors were current to recall the issue, nothing has been done to date, although the debate is still on.

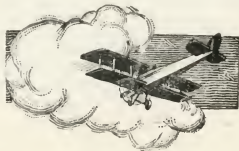
There are ten stamps to the complete set, and many combinations were used when the 5c issue was released at West Point for the Army and at Annapolis for the Navy, by applying all the stamps on one cover. This makes a very attractive item, although the cancellation as First Day is only associated with the 5c stamp.

Your correspondent prepared some covers with each value on one cover, which makes only 5 covers necessary for the set, all being cancelled at Washington, D. C. on the respective day of issue. The cachets are reproductions by ink sketches of the stamps in two colors and raised printing. This combination has proved most popular.

On Feb. 15, two new Air Mail stamps were released on short notice from Washington, D. C. The 20c green and 50c red for use on Trans-Pacific Mail scheduled for April 21st when the Clipper will extend its flight to Macao and Hong Kong. The postmaster did not apply stamps for First Day Covers and consequently the amount was very low in comparison with other issues.

It also is true that there is always a marked decrease of First Day cancellations on the higher values when so many collectors cannot afford to secure duplicates and others cannot afford to get them at all. As with any other commodity, scarcity controls the value; so the value of such items will soon be enhanced.

Now I must ask you to assist me in preparing these articles so they will be interesting to yourself and others by letting me know your questions on cover collecting. Address me either in care of this magazine or at East Rutherford, N. J.



THOSE STAMPS AND COINS

By

Jack E. Fry

WELCOME, Fantasy Magazine readers! I hope you will join the ranks of the regular subscribers to the Correspondent and let me know how you like my jottings about stamps and coins. And---if I can be of any help---don't forget to write me. Address your letter to: P. O. Box 1200, Denver, Colorado. Always enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope; however, no fee is required. Just mention this column.

A good start for one who wishes to collect stamps would be the many interesting commemorative issues which seem to be making their appearance at a rapid rate these days.

At present, the Army and Navy series have the spotlight. These, like many of the commemorative stamps of the last few years, are larger than the common variety of stamps with which everyone is familiar. They come in sheets of fifty each, instead of the regulation sheet of one hundred. To date, eight of the Army and Navy series have been released and are for sale. These consist of four of each, namely: one cent Army; one cent Navy; two cent Army; two cent Navy; three cent Army; three cent Navy; four cent Army; and four cent Navy.

The Navy stamps may be distinguished from the Army inasmuch as they have a ship on each of them. Start with these---either in singles or box of fours---and make it a point to secure one of each new commemorative stamp that comes out. At the same time, try to find a reasonable dealer or collector from whom you may purchase the commemoratives of the past year and before. Buy a nice album---preferably looseleaf---and mount your stamps carefully. Poorly mounted stamps are uninteresting to both the collector and the layman. Mount them neatly, and while I'm on the subject of "mint" or unused stamps, let me suggest that you use pages in your album designed for such stamps. Most collectors object to having "mint" stamps in their collection which have been mounted with hinges. Hinges, by the way, are the little gummed stickers which, after being folded in half, are used almost universally to affix stamps to album pages. These are fine for used stamps; but if you are going in for unused commemoratives or other stamps, buy an album made expressly for this purpose. As with anything else you buy, the best is always the cheapest.

Those contemplating the collection of coins had best specialize on some country or type of coin. To secure *all* the coins of even *one* country would work a hardship on the purse of most men; however, *one* coin of *each* of the principal countries of the world would be within the means of many. A collection of this kind would leave ample opportunity for as little or as much collecting as the individual desires. The result---at any stage of the endeavor---would be most interesting.

Another thought would be the small coins of the world. There are many of them, to say the least, but some of them are very unusual.

Still another worthwhile collection would be Indian Head pennies---one of each year. Have you ever seen one of the boards used to mount them? They may be purchased at a nominal cost. There is also a board for Lincoln cents. Underneath each date is a figure which indicates the number of millions coined in that particular year. Other valuable information makes up the remainder of the boards.

Now, as in the last issue, I'll save your time and patience if you're looking for some of the rare coins, in search of which unscrupulous dealers still insist upon setting thousands of persons yearly. My pet "gripe"---at present ---is 1913 nickels. I don't mean to say "there is no such animal"; what I do say is forget you ever read where several hundred dollars would be paid for one. Here's why. The said dealers want *Liberty Head* nickels of 1913---not the common Indian Head or Buffalo nickel. And---unless I'm thinking of "hen's teeth"---there were but six of the desired nickels coined. The Philadelphia mint did the honors. I trust there are not too many of my readers whose hopes I have dashed to earth in making this disclosure. Seriously, though, dealers should offer not hundreds, but *thousands* for such, shall we say, "elusive" coins. They might as well.

With this thought, I shall "sign off" until the next issue of the Correspondent. I hope you'll all be back for more.

ODDS AND ENDS

(Continued from page 23)

Received this month were the following amateur and semi-professional magazines: Science Fiction Critic, published bimonthly by the Futile Press, Box 27, Lakeport, California, at ten cents per copy. The Critic is a neatly printed magazine of fourteen pages; a "slick". The May, 1937, issue contains an interesting and informative article, "Between Other Covers", by Donn Brazier. Louis C. Smith's rambling and fascinating column, "Fantasiana", and an article by Sam Moskowitz bearing the seemingly impertinent title, "Was Weinbaum Great?" We found it an altogether interesting and much-improved issue.

We received and enjoyed Fantasmagoria,

a new magazine published monthly at 223 John Street, South Amboy, N. J. It is a well-hectographed publication, selling at five cents per copy. The first issue contains a fine poem by the late H. P. Lovecraft, "Astrophobos", along with an article by Duane W. Rimel and a good burlesque, "A Bard in the Hand", by Robert Bloch. Illustrations are by Baldonis. This magazine shows much promise and we highly recommend it to you. Hollywood Trade News, published monthly at 1545 W. Pico, Los Angeles, Calif., is a well-printed mail-order paper, selling at five cents per copy. The May, 1937, issue contains authoritative articles by John D. Waldron and J. Martin Moran, plus several interesting miscellaneous items. In our opinion, this publication well merits your attention.

Helios, a neatly printed magazine pub-

lished by Sam Moskowitz at 603 South 11th Street, Newark, N. J., sells for five cents a copy. The first contains many short and to-the-point items which should prove interesting to the more ardent fans. Featured are biographies of Morris Dullens and Jim Blish, a short story, and various articles by Donald A. Wolheim, Alex Osheroff, etc.

Visions Magazine of Verse, published at Casa Ocotillo, Plaster City, Calif., is a beautifully displayed publication, containing poetry which generally strikes an unusually fine average. We predict this magazine will be responsible for no small number of tomorrow's poetic geniuses. Though priced at twenty-five cents a copy, the format and quality of this magazine well make up for the cost.

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