

THE FANTASY FAN

THE FANS' OWN MAGAZINE

Published
Monthly

Editor: Charles D. Hornig
(Managing Editor: Wonder Stories)

10 cents a copy
\$1.00 per year

137 West Grand Street, Elizabeth, New Jersey

Vol. 2, No. 2

October, 1934

Whole No. 14

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Title: The Fantasy Fan, Volume 2, Number 2, October 1934
The Fan's Own Magazine

Author: Charles D. Hornig

Release Date: March 27, 2021 [eBook #64940]

Language: English

Character set encoding: UTF-8

Produced by: Greg Weeks, Mary Meehan and the Online Distributed
Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net>

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE FANTASY
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[Transcriber's Note: Extensive research did not uncover any evidence that the U.S. copyright on this publication was renewed.]

OUR READERS SAY

With this issue, we are dedicating each number to someone or something. H. P. Lovecraft, one of the greatest writers of the weird alive today, well deserves the honor of being the first, with a story and long instalment of his "Supernatural Horror in Literature" for October. The November issue will be dedicated to Clark Ashton Smith, December to Edgar Allan Poe, (in this issue Mr. Lovecraft's article deals entirely with Poe and is the longest one yet) and the January number to Weird Poetry. Schedule subject to change without notice. Let us know what you think of these dedications, and submit your vote telling who or what you want the following issues to be dedicated to.

This issue has gone to press before reports have come in on the September number, which boasted the smooth paper cover, so all letters refer to the August or previous issues.

"Read the new TFF yesterday with great interest and pleasure. The sketches by Barlow and Morse are very notable. Let us hope that the success of volume one will be brilliantly duplicated in 1934-5."—H. P. Lovecraft, Providence, R.I.

"Congratulations on your successful piloting of TFF through the first year of its existence! The high grade of the subject matter and the careful planning visible in its presentation have made it always interesting and instructive. I sincerely hope that you will soon be able to realize your hopes of expansion."—Richard F. Searight, Detroit, Mich.

"The August issue is very good, Richard Ely Morse's 'Ebony and Ash' being an outstanding little thing. I hope to see more verses, if possible, from the 'Dreams of Yith' by Duane W. Rimel."—Robert Nelson, St. Charles, Ill.

"Great is the August issue of TFF! I enjoyed immensely the splendid tale 'Ebony and Ash,' by Richard Ely Morse. Let's have many more fine stories by this new talented author. I enjoyed very much, too, the excellent poems, 'Necromancy' and 'The Unremembered Realm.' These two poems were certainly the product of masters of the art. 'The Annals of the Jinns' was also very good, as was the entire issue. I shall never grow tired of reading such a grand issue! Enclosed find ten cents for an additional copy."—Fred John Walsen, Denver, Col.

"Just a line to let you know how much I enjoyed the August TFF. R. H. Barlow scores again with his story 'The Fall of the Three Cities' and the one by Richard Ely Morse was splendid. Your brief editorial interested me a great deal and points toward a better and larger TFF! The poems by Clark Ashton Smith and Robert Nelson were superb."—Duane W. Rimel, Asotin, Wash.

"Enclosed you will find a dollar for another year's subscription to our great little magazine, TFF. Allow me to congratulate you for keeping it alive, even at a financial loss to yourself, for the interests of the weirdfan. The outstanding features of the more recent issues are Kenneth B. Pritchard's 'True Experiences.' I imagine that the late Charles Fort would have liked to interview him."—Bob Tucker, Bloomington, Ill.

"Your August number is well up to average. The Morse story was well-written and interesting; and the two poems really quite good."—R. H. Barlow, De Land, Fla.

"The last issue of TFF was diversified enough to satisfy all of us. My only complaint is that the magazine is far too small. I'd like to see two or three times the number of pages. Let's hope the day soon arrives when you will be able to do so. An occasional notice by Wright would no doubt work wonders. I was glad to see that Petaja has continued his little column on 'Famous Fantasy Fiction.' However, he lists 'Sinister Stories' written by Walker. I suspect he has in mind the book 'Sinister Stories' *written* by Jasper John and *published* by Walker in

England in 1930. Again he mentions 'Wolves of Darkness' by Algernon Blackwood. If memory serves me correctly, I believe the only story in the book written by Blackwood was the title story, 'Wolves of Darkness.' All the others were written by Wilford Wilson."—H. Koenig, New York, N.Y.

"Just finished the first volume of TFF and am writing to tell you it's a grand mag. Far the best stories were Howard's 'Gods of the North' and Morse's 'Ebony and Ash.' Other high spots were Hoy Ping Pong's satires; numbers one, three, five, and eight of the 'Annals of the Jinns'; 'From Beyond,' by H. P. Lovecraft; 'Spurs of Death' by Natalie H. Wooley; Lovecraft's serial article; and 'Weird Whisperings.' I have only two kicks coming. You don't have enough science fiction material and I don't care for Mr. Pritchard's exciting experiences."—J. Sam Smart, New Bloomfield, Mo.

"It was easy to see that Barlow's 'The Fall of the Three Cities' was the best feature of the August issue. The best column was 'Gleanings' by Louis C. Smith. I hope to see this new feature every month. All in all, this issue was well above standard and I hope that during the next year you can give us fans as high a grade of material as you have been doing. My congratulations on the past year's success! We are with you in the future, too!"—F. Lee Baldwin, Asotin, Wash.

Write in to "Our Readers Say" and give us your opinion of the current issue of THE FANTASY FAN. Your suggestions and criticisms are welcome too.

WITHIN THE CIRCLE

by F. Lee Baldwin

At one time Forrest Ackerman had a complete collection of *Ghost Stories*—the old large-size magazine of the photographic illustrations, featuring strange stories by Victor Rousseau, Ray Cummings, Frank Belknap Long, Jr., etc.—but disposed of them all upon coming across science fiction. This was when he saw his first *Amazing Stories*—Vol. 2, No. 6, the September 1926 number. Incidentally, this issue contains the only story by H. P. Lovecraft ever to appear in *Amazing*, "The Colour Out of Space."

Farnsworth Wright is a former music critic of *The Chicago American*.

This seems to be quite a season with our authors for travelling, E. Hoffmann

Price has just recently paid a second visit to Clark Ashton Smith of Auburn, Calif.; Robert E. Howard spent some time exploring the gigantic Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico. Perhaps we'll be getting some tales along that line, after a while. Richard F. Searight spent some time amid the scenic grandeur in Houghton, Michigan; H. P. Lovecraft has just returned from a visit with R. H. Barlow of De Land, Florida and is now taking a trip to ancient Nantucket Island, off the coast of Massachusetts; Jack Williamson has also returned from a sojourn in Key West where he met Edmond Hamilton; Donald Wandrei has been on a fishing trip in the woods of his native state, Minnesota.

H. P. Lovecraft denies all connections with the "The Battle that Ended the Century" (Ms. found in a time machine). He was in De Land or in St. Augustine at the time it was mailed, and by the time he was in Washington D. C., the Eastern readers had received their copies.

Richard Ely Morse is the son of an Amherst professor and an assistant librarian at Princeton.

Louis C. Smith of Oakland, Calif. is a collector of weird and fantastic books and has a library of over two hundred volumes.

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SUPERNATURAL HORROR IN LITERATURE

by H. P. Lovecraft

Part Thirteen

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VI. Spectral Literature on the Continent

On the continent literary horror fared well. The celebrated short tales and novels of Ernst Theodor Wilhelm Hoffmann (1776-1822) are a byword for mellowness of background and maturity of form, though they incline to levity and extravagance, and lack the exalted moments of stark, breathless terror which a less sophisticated writer might have achieved. Generally they convey the grotesque rather than the terrible. Most artistic of all the continental weird tales is the German classic *Undine*, (1814) by Friedrich Hein-Karl, Baron de la Motte Fouque. In this story of a water-spirit who married a mortal and gained a human soul there is a delicate fineness of craftsmanship which makes it notable in any department of literature, and an easy naturalness which places it close to the genuine folk-myth. It is, in fact, derived from a tale told by the Renaissance physician and alchemist Paracelsus in his *Treatise on Elemental Sprites*.

Undine, daughter of a powerful water-prince, was exchanged by her father as a small child for a fisherman's daughter, in order that she might acquire a soul by wedding a human being. Meeting the noble youth Huldbrand at the cottage of her foster-father by the sea at the edge of a haunted wood, she soon marries him, and accompanies him to his ancestral castle of Ringstetten. Huldbrand, however, eventually wearies of his wife's supernatural affiliations, and especially of the appearances of her uncle, the malicious woodland waterfall-spirit Kugleborn; a weariness increased by his growing affection for Bertalda, who turns out to be the fisherman's child for whom Undine was exchanged. At length, on a voyage down the Danube, he is provoked by some innocent act of his devoted wife to utter the angry words which consign her back to her supernatural element; from which she can, by the laws of her species, return only once—to kill him, whether she will no, if ever he prove unfaithful to her memory. Later, when Huldbrand is about to be married to Bertalda, Undine returns for her sad duty, and bears his

life away in tears. When he is buried among his fathers in the village churchyard a veiled, snow-white female figure appears among the mourners, but after the prayer is seen no more. In her place is a little silver spring, which murmurs its way almost completely around the new grave and empties into a neighbouring lake. The villagers show it to this day, and say that Undine and her Huldbrand are thus united in death. Many passages and atmospheric touches in this tale reveal Fouque as an accomplished artist in the field of the macabre; especially the descriptions of the haunted wood with its gigantic snow-white man and various unnamed terrors, which occur early in the narrative.

Not so well known as *Undine*, but remarkable for its convincing realism and freedom from Gothic stock devices, is the *Amber Witch* of Wilhelm Meinhold, another product of the German fantastic genius of the earlier nineteenth century. This tale, which is laid in the time of the Thirty Years' War, purports to be a clergyman's manuscript found in an old church at Coserow, and centres round the writer's daughter, Maria Schweidler, who is wrongly accused of witchcraft. She has found a deposit of amber which she keeps secret for various reasons, and the unexplained wealth obtained from this lends colour to the accusation; an accusation instigated by the malice of the wolf-hunting nobleman Wittich Appelmann, who has vainly pursued her with ignoble designs. The deeds of a real witch, who afterward comes to a horrible supernatural end in prison, are glibly imputed to the hapless Maria; and after a typical witchcraft trial with forced confessions under torture she is about to be burned at the stake when saved just in time by her lover, a noble youth from a neighbouring district. Meinhold's great strength is in his air of casual and realistic verisimilitude, which intensifies our suspense and sense of the unseen by half persuading us that the menacing events must somehow be either the truth or very close to the truth. Indeed, so thorough is this realism that a popular magazine once published the main points of *The Amber Witch* as an actual occurrence of the seventeenth century!

In the present generation German horror-fiction is most notably represented by Hanns Heinz Ewers who brings to bear on his dark conceptions an effective knowledge of modern psychology. Novels like *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, *Alraune*, and short stories like *The Spider* contain distinctive qualities which raise them to a classic level.

But France as well as Germany has been active in the realm of weirdness. Victor Hugo, in such tales as *Hans of Iceland*, and Balzac, in *The Wild Ass's Skin*, *Seraphita*, and *Louis Lambert*, both employ supernaturalism to a great or less

extent; though generally only as a means to some more human end, and without the sincere and daemonic intensity which characterises the born artist in shadows. It is in Theophile Gautier that we first seem to find an authentic French sense of the unreal world, and here there appears a spectral mastery which, though not continuously used, is recognisable at once as something alike genuine and profound. Short tales like *Atavar*, *The Foot of the Mummy*, and *Clarimonde* display glimpses of forbidden vistas that allure, tantalise, and sometimes horrify; whilst the Egyptian visions evoked in *One of Cleopatra's Nights* are of the keenest and most expressive potency. Gautier captured the inmost soul of aeon-weighted Egypt, with its cryptic life and Cyclopean architecture, and uttered once and for all the eternal horror of its nether world of catacombs, where to the end of time millions of stiff, spiced corpses will stare up in the blackness with glassy eyes, awaiting some awesome and unrelatable summons. Gustave Flaubert ably continued the tradition of Gautier in orgies of poetic phantasy like *The Temptation of St. Anthony*, and but for a strong realistic bias might have been an arch-weaver of tapestried terrors. Later on we see the stream divide, producing strange poets and fantasists of the symbolist and decadent schools whose dark interests really centre more in abnormalities of human thought and instinct than in the actual supernatural, and subtle story-tellers whose thrills are quite directly derived from the night-black wells of cosmic unreality. Of the former class of "artists in sin" the illustrious poet Baudelaire, influenced vastly by Poe, is the supreme type; whilst the psychological novelist Joris-Karl Huysmans, a true child of the eighteen nineties, is at once the summation and finale. The latter and purely narrative class is continued by Prosper Merimee, whose *Venus of Ille* presents in terse and convincing prose the same ancient statue-bride theme which Thomas Moore cast in ballad form in *The Ring*.

The horror-tales of the powerful and cynical Guy de Maupassant, written as his final madness gradually over-took him, presents individualities of their own; being rather the morbid outpourings of a realistic mind in a pathological state than the healthily imaginative product of a vision naturally disposed toward phantasy and sensitive to the normal illusions of the unseen. Nevertheless they are of the keenest interest and poignancy; suggesting with marvelous force the imminence of nameless terrors, and the relentless dogging of an ill-starred individual by hideous and menacing representatives of the outer blackness. Of these stories *The Horla* is generally regarded as the masterpiece. Relating the advent to France of an invisible being who lives on water and milk, sways the minds of others, and seems to be the vanguard of a horde of extra-terrestrial organisms arrived on earth to subjugate and overwhelm mankind, this tense

narrative is perhaps without a peer in its particular department; notwithstanding its indebtedness to a tale by the American Fitz-James O'Brien for details in describing the actual presence of the unseen monster. Other potentially dark creations of de Maupassant are *Who Knows?*, *The Spectre*, *He*, *The Diary of a Madman*, *The White Wolf*, *On the River*, and the grisly verse entitled *Horror*.

(Continued Next Month)

THE FAVORITE WEIRD STORIES OF H. P. LOVECRAFT **(Courtesy of H. Koenig)**

"The Willows" A. Blackwood, "The White Powder," "The White People," "The Black Seal" A. Machen, "The Fall of the House of Usher" E. A. Poe, "The House of Sounds" M. P. Shiel, "The Yellow Sign" R. W. Chambers, "Count Magnus" M. R. James, "The Death of Halpin Frayser" A. Bierce, "The Moon Pool" (original novelette) A. Merritt.

The first nine titles were in Mr. Lovecraft's original list published in "The Side Show." You will notice that he stipulates the original novelette version of "The Moon Pool" as the tenth selection. This of course eliminates the story as it was published in book form, including the sequel.

WEIRD WHISPERINGS **by Schwartz and Weisinger**

Rumor had it that for several years Farnsworth Wright, editor of *Weird Tales*, was writing stories and poems under the pseudonym of Francis Hard. When we asked for permission to "break" the story, Wright said that "since the secret is already out that poems and stories published under the name Francis Hard were in fact written by me, of course I have no further objection to its being known. I have written nothing new since I became editor of *Weird Tales* in 1924, but I wrote stories for *Weird Tales* previous to that, when it was edited by Edwin Baird. When I became editor one of my stories was already in type for the next issue (A story called "The Great Panjandrum"). I thought it looked rather phony

for an editor to use his own stories in his magazine, even though the story had been accepted by a previous editor; so I used the pen name Francis Hard as the author of that story (Hard was my maternal grandmother's name). Feeling that an editor is a bad judge of his own stuff, I submitted some stories that I had written several years ago, to Otis Adelbert Kline, whose literary judgement I value highly, and used the two that he liked—one in *Oriental Stories*, and the other in its successor, *The Magic Carpet*. Two other stories, which Kline considered rotten, I quickly canned—may they rest in peace."

Frank Belknap Long, Jr., is now trying to invade the detective story market.... Here's hoping he matches the stride set by his pal, Donald Wandrei.... New York fans would do well to tune in on Alonzo Deen Cole's weird broadcasts, "The Witch's Tale," over WOR, and to "Tales of Terror," over WINS.... S. Gordon Gurwitt besides turning out weird stories, also writes detective yarns, and bears an amazing resemblance to Eddie Cantor.... Farnsworth Wright has never yet rejected a story on the grounds that it was too juvenile.... A. Merritt claims he sits down to write "only after I have exhausted myself of all possible excuses".... Arthur Sarsfield Ward, when asked why he used the pseudonym of Sax Rohmer for his writings, responded: "The reason why I use the name Sax Rohmer is as much a mystery to me as it is to you."

Some Seabury Quinn information: Seabury Quinn's next Jules de Grandin story will be published in the January, 1935, issue of *Weird Tales*, and is entitled "Hands of the Dead." It deals with post-mortem hypnotism.... Quinn (known to *Weird Tales* fans as the Old Marster—not "Master") is working on a series introducing a new character, Thomas Eldridge Carter, a twenty-six year old investigator for the Grand Central Life Assurance Company. The series will deal with Carter's adventures in ferreting out the whys and wherefores of the deaths and disappearances of persons heavily insured by the company. Like all of Quinn's stories, these will have elements of weirdness, but will not contain supernatural elements.

FUNGI FROM YUGGOTH

by H. P. Lovecraft

I. The Book

The place was dark and dusty and half-lost
In tangles of old alleys near the quays,
Reeking of strange things brought in from the seas,
And with queer curls of fog that west winds tossed.
Small lozenge panes, obscured by smoke and frost,
Just showed the books, in piles like twisted trees,
Rotting from floor to roof—congeries
Of crumbling elder lore at little cost.

I entered, charmed, and from a cobwebbed heap
Took up the nearest tome and thumbed it through,
Trembling at curious words that seemed to keep
Some secret, monstrous if one only knew,
Then, looking for some seller old in craft,
I could find nothing but a voice that laughed.

II. Pursuit

I held the book beneath my coat, at pains
To hide the thing from sight in such a place;
Hurrying through the ancient harbour lanes
With often-turning head and nervous pace.
Dull, furtive windows in old tottering brick
Peered at me oddly as I hastened by,
And thinking what they sheltered, I grew sick
For a redeeming glimpse of clean blue sky.

No one had seen me take the thing—but still
A blank laugh echoed in my whirling head,
And I could guess what nighted worlds of ill
Lurked in that volume I had coveted.

The way grew strange—the walls alike and madding—
And far behind me, unseen feet were padding.

(Note: These verses have never before been published.)

Beyond the Wall of Sleep

by H. P. Lovecraft

"I have an exposition of sleep come upon me"—Shakespeare

I have often wondered if the majority of mankind ever pause to reflect upon the occasionally titanic significance of dreams, and of the obscure world to which they belong. Whilst the greater number of our nocturnal visions are perhaps no more than faint and fantastic reflections of our waking experiences—Freud to the contrary with his puerile symbolism—there are still a certain remainder whose immundane and ethereal character permits of no ordinary interpretation, and whose vaguely exciting and disquieting effect suggests possible minute glimpses into a sphere of mental existence no less important than physical life, yet separated from that life by an all but impassable barrier. From my experience I cannot doubt but that man, when lost to terrestrial consciousness, is indeed sojourning in another and uncorporeal life of far different nature from the life we know; and of which only the slightest and most indistinct memories linger after waking. From those blurred and fragmentary memories we may infer much, yet prove little. We may guess that in dreams life, matter, and vitality, as the earth knows such things, are not necessarily constant; and that time and space do not exist as our waking selves comprehend them. Sometimes I believe that this less material life is our truer life, and that our vain presence on the terraqueous globe is itself the secondary or merely virtual phenomenon.

It was from a youthful reverie filled with speculations of this sort that I arose one afternoon in the winter of 1900-01, when to the state psychopathic institution in which I served as an interne was brought the man whose case has ever since haunted me so unceasingly. His name, as given on the records, was Joe Slater, or Slaader, and his appearance was that of the typical denizen of the Catskill Mountain region; one of those strange, repellent scions of a primitive Colonial peasant stock whose isolation for nearly three centuries in the hilly fastnesses of a little travelled countryside has caused them to sink to a kind of barbaric degeneracy, rather than advance with their more fortunately placed brethren of the thickly settled districts. Among these odd folk, who correspond exactly to the decadent element of "white trash" in the south, law and morals are non-existent; and their general mental status is probably below that of any other section of the

native American people.

Joe Slater, who came to the institution in the vigilant custody of four state policemen, and who was described as a highly dangerous character, certainly presented no evidence of his perilous disposition when I first beheld him. Though well above the middle stature, and of somewhat brawny frame, he was given an absurd appearance of harmless stupidity by the pale, sleepy blueness of his small watery eyes, the scantiness of his neglected and never-shaven growth of yellow beard, and the listless drooping of his heavy nether lip. His age was unknown, since among his kind neither family records nor permanent family ties exist; but from the baldness of his head in front, and from the decayed condition of his teeth, the head surgeon wrote him down as a man of about forty.

From the medical and court documents we learned all that could be gathered of his case: This man, a vagabond, hunter, and trapper, had always been strange in the eyes of his primitive associates. He had habitually slept at night beyond the ordinary time, and upon waking would often talk of unknown things in a manner so bizarre as to inspire fear even in the hearts of an unimaginative populace. Not that his form of language was at all unusual, for he never spoke save in the debased patois of his environment; but the tone and tenor of his utterances were of such mysterious wildness, that none might listen without apprehension. He himself was generally as terrified and baffled as his auditors, and within an hour after awakening would forget all that he had said, or at least all that had caused him to say what he did; relapsing into a bovine, half amiable normality like that of the other hill-dwellers.

As Slater grew older, it appeared, his matutinal aberrations had gradually increased in frequency and violence; till about a month before his arrival at the institution had occurred the shocking tragedy which caused his arrest by the authorities. One day near noon, after a profound sleep begun in a whiskey debauch at about five of the previous afternoon, the man had roused himself most suddenly; with ululations so horrible and unearthly that they brought several neighbours to his cabin—a filthy sty where he dwelt with a family as indescribable as himself. Rushing out into the snow, he had flung his arms aloft and commenced a series of leaps directly upward in the air; the while shouting his determination to reach some "big, big cabin with brightness in the roof and walls and floor and the loud queer music far away." As two men of moderate size sought to restrain him, he had struggled with maniacal force and fury, screaming of his desire and need to find and kill a certain "thing that shines and shakes and laughs". At length, after temporarily felling one of his detainers with

a sudden blow, he had flung himself upon the other in a daemoniac ecstasy of blood-thirstiness, shrieking fiendishly that he would "jump high in the air and burn his way through anything that stopped him." Family and neighbours had now fled in a panic, and when the more courageous of them returned, Slater was gone, leaving behind an unrecognisable pulp-like thing that had been a living man but an hour before. None of mountaineers had dared to pursue him, and it is likely that they would have welcomed his death from the cold; but when several mornings later they heard his screams from a distant ravine they realised that he had somehow managed to survive, and that his removal in one way or another would be necessary. Then had followed an armed searching party, whose purpose (whatever it may have been originally) became that of a sheriff's posse after one of the seldom popular state troopers had by accident observed, then questioned, and finally joined the seekers.

On the third day Slater was found unconscious in the hollow of a tree, and taken to the nearest gaol; where alienists from Albany examined him as soon as his senses returned. To them he told a simple story. He had, he said, gone to sleep one afternoon about sundown after drinking much liquor. He had awakened to find himself standing bloody-handed in the snow before his cabin, the mangled corpse of his neighbour Peter Slader at his feet. Horrified, he had taken to the woods in a vague effort to escape from the scene of what must have been his crime. Beyond these things he seemed to know nothing, nor could the expert questioning of his interrogators bring out a single additional fact. That night Slater slept quietly, and the next morning he wakened with no singular feature save a certain alteration of expression. Dr. Barnard, who had been watching the patient, thought he noticed in the pale blue eyes a certain gleam of peculiar quality; and in the flaccid lips an all but imperceptible tightening, as if of intelligent determination. But when questioned, Slater relapsed into the habitual vacancy of the mountaineer, and only reiterated what he had said on the preceding day.

On the third morning occurred the first of the man's mental attacks. After some show of uneasiness in sleep, he burst forth into a frenzy so powerful that the combined efforts of four men were needed to bind him in a strait-jacket. The alienists listened with keen attention to his words, since their curiosity had been aroused to a high pitch by the suggestive yet mostly conflicting and incoherent stories of his family and neighbours. Slater raved for upward of fifteen minutes, babbling in his backwoods dialect of green edifices of light, oceans of space, strange music, and shadowy mountains and valleys. But most of all did he dwell upon some mysterious blazing entity that shook and laughed and mocked at him.

This vast, vague personality seemed to have done him a terrible wrong, and to kill it in triumphant revenge was his paramount desire. In order to reach it, he said, he would soar through abysses of emptiness, *burning* every obstacle that stood in his way. Thus ran his discourse, until with the greatest suddenness he ceased. The fire of madness died from his eyes, and in dull wonder he looked at his questioners and asked why he was bound. R. Barnard unbuckled the leather harness and did not restore it till night, when he succeeded in persuading Slater to don it of his own volition, for his own good. The man had now admitted that he sometimes talked queerly, though he knew not why.

Within a week two more attacks appeared, but from them the doctors learned little. On the *source* of Slater's visions they speculated at length, for since he could neither read nor write, and had apparently never heard a legend or fairy tale, his gorgeous imagery was quite inexplicable. That it could not come from any known myth or romance was made especially clear by the fact that the unfortunate lunatic expressed himself only in his own simple manner. He raved of things he did not understand and could not interpret; things which he claimed to have experienced, but which he could not have learned through any normal or connected narration. The alienists soon agreed that abnormal dreams were the foundation of the trouble; dreams whose vividness could for a time completely dominate the waking mind of this basically inferior man. With due formality Slater was tried for murder, acquitted on the ground of insanity, and committed to the institution wherein I held so humble a post.

I have said that I am a constant speculator concerning dream life, and from this you may judge of the eagerness with which I applied myself to the study of the new patient as soon as I had fully ascertained the facts of his case. He seemed to sense a certain friendliness in me; born no doubt of the interest I could not conceal, and the gentle manner in which I questioned him. Not that he ever recognised me during his attacks, when I hung breathlessly upon his chaotic but cosmic word-pictures; but he knew me in his quiet hours, when he would sit by his barred window weaving baskets of straw and willow, and perhaps pining for the mountain freedom he could never again enjoy. His family never called to see him; probably it had found another temporary head, after the manner of decadent mountain folk.

By degrees I commenced to feel an overwhelming wonder at the mad and fantastic conceptions of Joe Slater. The man himself was pitifully inferior in mentality and language alike; but his glowing, titanic visions, though described in a barbarous and disjointed jargon, were assuredly things which only a superior

or even exceptional brain could conceive. How, I often asked myself, could the stolid imagination of a Catskill degenerate conjure up sights whose very possession argued a lurking spark of genius? How could any backwoods dullard have gained so much as an idea of those glittering realms of supernal radiance and space about which Slater ranted in his furious delirium? More and more I inclined to the belief that in the pitiful personality who cringed before me lay the disordered nucleus of something beyond my comprehension; something infinitely beyond the comprehension of my more experienced but less imaginative medical and scientific colleagues.

And yet I could extract nothing definite from the man. The sum of all my investigation was, that in a kind of semi-corporeal dream life Slater wandered or floated through resplendent and prodigious valleys, meadows, gardens, cities, and palaces of light; in a region unbounded and unknown to man. That there he was no peasant or degenerate, but creature of importance and vivid life; moving proudly and dominantly, and checked only by a certain deadly enemy, who seemed to be a being of visible yet ethereal structure, and who did not appear to be of human shape, since Slater never referred to it as a *man*, or as aught save a *thing*. This *thing* had done Slater some hideous but unnamed wrong, which the maniac (if maniac he were) yearned to avenge. From the manner in which Slater alluded to their dealings, I judged that he and the luminous *thing* had met on equal terms; that in his dream existence the man was himself a luminous *thing* of the same race as his enemy. This impression was sustained by his frequent references to *flying through space* and *burning* all that impeded his progress. Yet these conceptions were formulated in rustic words wholly inadequate to convey them, a circumstance which drove me to the conclusion that if a true dream world indeed existed, oral language was not its medium for the transmission of thought. Could it be that the dream soul inhabiting this inferior body was desperately struggling to speak things which the simple and halting tongue of dullness could not utter? Could it be that I was face to face with intellectual emanations which would explain the mystery if I could but learn to discover and read them? I did not tell the older physicians of these things, for middle age is sceptical, cynical, and disinclined to accept new ideas. Besides, the head of the institution had but lately warned me in his paternal way that I was overworking; that my mind needed a rest.

It had long been my belief that human thought consists basically of atomic or molecular motion, convertible into ether waves of radiant energy like heat, light, and electricity. This belief had early led me to contemplate the possibility of telepathy or mental communication by means of suitable apparatus, and I had in

my college days prepared a set of transmitting and receiving instruments somewhat similar to the cumbrous devices employed in wireless telegraphy at that crude, pre-radio period. These I had tested with a fellow-student; but achieving no result, had soon packed them away with other scientific odds and ends for possible future use. Now, in my intense desire to probe into the dream life of Joe Slater, I sought these instruments again; and spent several days in repairing them for action. When they were complete once more I missed no opportunity for their trial. At each outburst of Slater's violence, I would fit the transmitter to his forehead and the receiver to my own; constantly making delicate adjustments for various hypothetical wave-lengths of intellectual energy. I had but little notion of how the thought-impressions would, if successfully conveyed, arouse an intelligent response in my brain; but I felt certain that I could detect and interpret them. Accordingly I continued my experiments, though informing no one of their nature.

It was on the twenty-first of February, 1901, that the thing occurred. As I look back across the years I realise how unreal it seems; and sometimes half-wonder if old Dr. Fenton was not right when he charged it all to my excited imagination. I recall that he listened with great kindness and patience when I told him, but afterward gave me a nerve-powder and arranged for the half-year's vacation on which I departed the next week. That fateful night I was wildly agitated and perturbed, for despite the excellent care he had received, Joe Slater was unmistakably dying. Perhaps it was his mountain freedom that he missed, or perhaps the turmoil in his brain had grown too acute for his rather sluggish physique; but at all events the flame of vitality flickered low in the decadent body. He was drowsy near the end, and as darkness fell he dropped off into a troubled sleep. I did not strap on the strait-jacket as was customary when he slept, since I saw that he was too feeble to be dangerous, even if he woke in mental disorder once more before passing away. But I did place upon his head and mine the two ends of my cosmic "radio" hoping against hope for a first and last message from the dream world in the brief time remaining. In the cell with us was one nurse, a mediocre fellow who did not understand the purpose of the apparatus, or think to inquire into my course. As the hours wore on I saw his head droop awkwardly in sleep, but I did not disturb him. I myself, lulled by the rhythmical breathing of the healthy and the dying man, must have nodded a little later.

The sound of weird lyric melody was what aroused me. Chords, vibrations, and harmonic ecstasies echoed passionately on every hand; while on my ravished sight burst the stupendous spectacle of ultimate beauty. Walls, columns, and architraves of living fire blazed effulgently around the spot where I seemed to float in air; extending upward to an infinitely high vaulted dome of indescribable splendour. Blending with this display of palatial magnificence, or rather, supplanting it at times in kaleidoscopic rotation, were glimpses of wide plains and graceful valleys, high mountains and inviting grottoes; covered with every lovely attribute of scenery which my delighted eye could conceive of, yet formed wholly of some glowing, ethereal plastic entity, which in consistency partook as much of spirit as of matter. As I gazed, I perceived that my own brain held the key to these enchanting metamorphoses; for each vista which appeared to me, was the one my changing mind most wished to behold. Amidst this elysian realm I dwelt not as a stranger, for each sight and sound was familiar to me; just as it had been for uncounted aeons of eternity before, and would be for like eternities to come.

Then the resplendent aura of my brother of light drew near and held colloquy with me, soul to soul, with silent and perfect interchange of thought. The hour was one of approaching triumph, for was not my fellow-being escaping at last from a degrading periodic bondage; escaping forever, and preparing to follow the accursed oppressor even unto the uttermost fields of ether, that upon it might be wrought a flaming cosmic vengeance which would shake the spheres? We floated thus for a little time, when I perceived a slight blurring and fading of the objects around us, as though some force were recalling me to earth—where I least wished to go. The form near me seemed to feel a change also, for it gradually brought its discourse towards a conclusion, and itself prepared to quit the scene; fading from my sight at a rate somewhat less rapid than that of the other objects. A few more thoughts were exchanged, and I knew that the luminous one and I were being recalled to bondage, though for my brother of light it would be the last time. The sorry planet shell being well-nigh spent, in less than an hour my fellow would be free to pursue the oppressor along the Milky Way and past the hither stars to the very confines of infinity.

A well-defined shock separates my final impression of the fading scene of light from my sudden and somewhat shamefaced awakening and straightening up in my chair as I saw the dying figure on the couch move hesitantly. Joe Slater was indeed awaking, though probably for the last time. As I looked more closely, I saw that in the sallow cheeks shone spots of colour which had never before been present. The lips, too, seemed unusual; being tightly compressed, as if by the

force of a stronger character than had been Slater's. The whole face finally began to grow tense, and the head turned restlessly with closed eyes. I did not rouse the sleeping nurse, but readjusted the slightly disarranged headbands of my telepathic "radio" intent to catch any parting message the dreamer might have to deliver. All at once the head turned sharply in my direction and the eyes fell open, causing me to stare in blank amazement at what I beheld. The man who had been Joe Slater, the Catskill decadent, was now gazing at me with a pair of luminous, expanding eyes whose blue seemed subtly to have deepened. Neither mania nor degeneracy was visible in that gaze, and I felt beyond a doubt that I was viewing a face behind which lay an active mind of high order.

At this juncture my brain became aware of a steady external influence operating upon it. I closed my eyes to concentrate my thoughts more profoundly, and was rewarded by the positive knowledge that *my long-sought mental message had come at last*. Each transmitted idea formed rapidly in my mind, and though no actual language was employed, my habitual association of conception and expression was so great that I seemed to be receiving the message in ordinary English.

"*Joe Slater is dead,*" came the soul-petrifying voice or agency from beyond the wall of sleep. My opened eyes sought the couch of pain in curious horror, but the blue eyes were still calmly gazing, and the countenance was still intelligently animated. "He is better dead, for he was unfit to bear the active intellect of cosmic entity. His gross body could not undergo the needed adjustments between ethereal life and planet life. He was too much of an animal, too little a man; yet it is through his deficiency that you have come to discover me, for the cosmic and planet souls rightly should never meet. He has been my torment and diurnal prison for forty-two of your terrestrial years. I am an entity like that which you yourself become in the freedom of dreamless sleep, I am your brother of light, and have floated with you in the effulgent valleys. It is not permitted me to tell your waking earth-self of your real self, but we are all roamers of vast spaces and travellers in many ages. Next year I may be dwelling in the Egypt which you call ancient, or in the cruel empire of Tsan Chan which is to come three thousand years hence. You and I have drifted to the worlds that reel about the red Arcturus, and dwelt in the bodies of the insect-philosophers that crawl proudly over the fourth moon of Jupiter. How little does the earth-self know life and its extent! How little, indeed, ought it to know for its own tranquillity! Of the oppressor I cannot speak. You on earth have unwittingly felt its distant presence—you who without knowing idly gave the blinking beacon the name of *Algol, the Daemon-Star*. It is to meet and conquer the oppressor that I have

vainly striven for aeons, held back by bodily encumbrances. Tonight I go as a Nemesis bearing just and blazingly cataclysmic vengeance. *Watch me in the sky close by the Daemon-Star*. I cannot speak longer, for the body of Joe Slater grows cold and rigid, and the coarse brains are ceasing to vibrate as I wish. You have been my friend in the cosmos; you have been my only friend on this planet—the only soul to sense and seek for me within the repellent form which lies on this couch. We shall meet again—perhaps in the shining mists of Orion's Sword, perhaps on a bleak plateau in prehistoric Asia. Perhaps in unremembered dreams tonight; perhaps in some other form an aeon hence, when the solar system shall have been swept away."

At this point the thought-waves abruptly ceased, and the pale eyes of the dreamer—or can I say dead man?—commenced to glaze fishily. In a half-stupor I crossed over to the couch and felt of his wrist, but found it cold, stiff, and pulseless. The sallow cheeks paled again, and the thick lips fell open, disclosing the repulsively rotten fangs of the degenerate Joe Slater. I shivered, pulled a blanket over the hideous face, and awakened the nurse. Then I left the cell and went silently to my room. I had an instant and unaccountable craving for a sleep whose dreams I should not remember.

The climax? What plain tale of science can boast of such a rhetorical effect? I have merely set down certain things appealing to me as facts, allowing you to construe them as you will. As I have already admitted, my superior, old Dr. Fenton, denies the reality of everything I have related. He vows that I was broken down with nervous strain, and badly in need of the long vacation on full pay which he so generously gave me. He assures me on his professional honour that Joe Slater was but a low-grade paranoic, whose fantastic notions must have come from the crude hereditary folk-tales which circulate in even the most decadent of communities. All this he tells me—yet I cannot forget what I saw in the sky on the night after Slater died. Lest you think me a biased witness, another pen must add this final testimony, which may perhaps supply the climax you expect. I will quote the following account of the star *Nova Persei* verbatim from the pages of that eminent astronomical authority, Prof. Garrett P. Serviss:

"On February 22, 1901, a marvelous new star was discovered by Dr. Anderson of Edinburgh, *not very far from Algol*. No star had been visible at that point before. Within 24 hours the stranger had become so bright that it outshone Capella. In a week or two it had visibly faded, and in the course of a few months it was hardly discernible with the naked eye."

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