

PEON



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A. DOUGHERTY '80.

THE EVICTION OF POLK

BY
Erik Jennel

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Why? The answer is obvious. In certain cultures (notably the Polynesian), factors of custom or mores interfere with the setting up of the conditions--the only set of conditions--under which the poltergeists are able to operate.

Certain segments of our Western-European-based civilization, on the other hand, have been especially bothered by poltergeists. Many complicated remedies have been tried, most of them with only indifferent success.

Again, why? Again the answer is obvious. Certain factors of custom, mores and socially acceptable conduct have been favorable to poltergeists, and the victims of poltergeist haunting have, on the whole, been unable to approach their problems with sufficient open-mindedness and lack of prejudice to take the necessary steps. Most victims have completely overlooked the simple and obvious reason and solution.

However, occasionally there have been-- and are, increasingly -- exceptions....

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He moved his hand slightly, then withdrew it. The bench on the lawn was in plain view, and twice in the last few minutes he had glimpsed the curtains moving and a living room window. Mrs. Mitchell would call her daughter or do something else to interfere if they so much as held hands. Mike didn't entirely blame her.

But he could look even if he didn't dare touch. Babs' blue sweater had been bought a year earlier, when she was slightly smaller and considerably flatter, but Mike thought its fit had improved.

Her face too had a special beauty. But now that beauty was clouded. Even in this interlude of temporary peace, even on a lovely blue-and-gold summer afternoon with Mike beside her, her lips betrayed her inner tensions.

And her eyes were haunted. Mike had watched that haunted look grow for almost four years.

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PEON NOTES

By Ye Editor

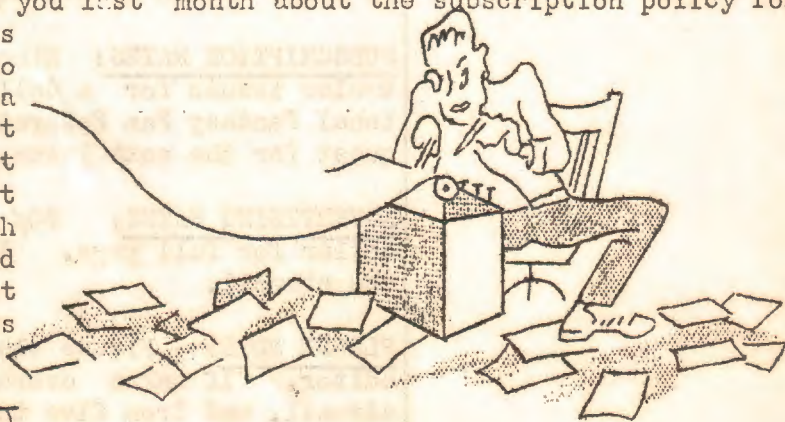
Aloha! One of the hardest things to do is to start off this column each issue. As usual, I have quite a bit to say (did you ever see me when I didn't?), but this time, I'm really stumped on how to get

started. Sometime ago, I read in a manual on journalism that one of the lazier tricks of column-writing is to say just what I have said, and before you know it, you're into the column! So, just ignore this first paragraph, and we'll both be happy!

Well, once again, it looks as if fandom is going to be shaken up by a war. Wonder just how many fans will be affected by the draft and the calling-up of the reserves. From reports received out here in Hawaii, already one well-known and well-liked fan, r.t.Rapp, has already rejoined the army and has given up all fannish activities. Fandom is really going to miss this guiding light and we all wish him the best of luck and hope to have him back with us soon!.....If you're wondering about my status--consider the fact that I've been in the navy now for almost eight years, and have always managed to publish something--during the war from here in Hawaii, from Guam, and also from Iwo Jima. At the present, I can't foresee anything that will force the suspension of PEON. We're too far removed from the theatre of operations in the far east to be touched to a great deal. Of course, we're working harder and longer hours at the base now, but I can always find time after hours to publish PEON, and as far as I know, it will be coming to you at least bi-monthly. However, you're going to have to put up with one more thing--another change of address. Last month I gave you an address downtown in Honolulu, but by the time you read this, the Riddle family will be living at the base instead, so please use the military address given on the index page; good for 2 years, I hope!

Referring once more to the possibility of fans going into service, if any of you do, I'd appreciate your letting me know right away--for I have a special service to military fans and readers of PEON. If by some chance any of you do come here or are in transit here, be sure to give me a phone call at the office, Monday through Friday, between 0800 and 1600. The telephone number is Pearl Harbor 62144 or Pearl Harbor 64143, and I'd be more than happy to show you around the island.

Don't forget what I told you last month about the subscription policy for receiving future issues of PEON. All you have to do is drop me a line (a postal will do) and let me know you wish the next issue. OR, if you don't want to be bothered with that, send a dollar and you'll receive the next nine issues (NFFF members will get twelve.) Simple isn't it?



((CONTINUED ON PAGE 27))

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He ran his fingers through a shock of sandy red hair that insisted on looking as though he'd combed it with a Mixmaster. He wasn't handsome; he was pleasantly ugly. And for once the mask of cockiness he wore around older people was missing.

"Babs, dearest, would you really do anything to get rid of Old Polt?" he asked soberly.

Fear came into the girl's eyes as he spoke that derogatory nickname aloud. She glanced around nervously, more than half expecting to see some loose object fly through the air, and Mike winced in impotent sympathy.

A breeze stirred a few fallen leaves, dropped them, and that was all. Natural. Gradually the girl's tense body relaxed again.

"Anything. Absolutely anything," she said with heartfelt earnestness. "I hate being like this. But nobddy has been able to help me. Those latest two professors from the Psychic Research Institute -- Dr. Kalterglotz and Dr. Anapesou -- haven't done any better than the others. They've only managed to get themselves hit a few times."

"I know, dear. But I think everyone has overlooked a certain vital factor."

The girl sighed hopelessly and her eyes misted. Her firmly pointed young breasts rose and fell as she breathed deeply, gathering herself for what she felt she had to say.

"You'll have to forget me, Mike. For your own sake."

Mike understood. He knew the poltergeist only too well. The invisible -- entity -- that plagued Babs' life bore him a special grudge. Heavy, sharp and otherwise potentially lethal objects had flung themselves at him more than once when he was near the girl. In fact his irritating effect on the poltergeist was responsible, as much as notions of the proper duties of motherhood, for Mrs. Mitchell's disapproval of him. But he didn't agree.

"Don't be a jerk!" he snapped, but risked softening his words by reaching out to touch her hand.

For a long minute they sat silent, companions in unhappiness.

"Babs, my idea might not do any good, but then again it might," he urged. "Willing?"

She studied his face. He wasn't nearly as cocky and rattlebrained as her parents -- particularly her mother -- thought.

"Yes! Yes!" she said. But quickly she checked her eagerness; there had been too many bitter disappointments in the past.

"What is it?" she asked.

Mike wrinkled. "Ssh! You know how Old Polt seems to know whenever we plan anything together. You'll just have to trust me."

The girl nodded, accepting his logic with a resignation far beyond her years. The poltergeist had at least done that for her; the strains and troubles and isolation and self-searching thoughts had brought her mental maturity long before most girls achieve it.

"Then?" she asked.

"I can't tell you even that. Old Polt can read your thoughts, because you're his nucleus of materialization. But he can't read mine."

"All right. Is there any way I can help?"

"That's my girl! Make sure, damned sure, there aren't any loose objects in your bedroom. Lock the door when you go to bed. Don't wear pajamas or a nightgown; sleep the -- the way I'd like to see you."

A smile softened the girl's lips. "I always do, Mike. And it's -- it's the way I'd like you to see me too." She didn't blush.

Mike's answering grin was pleasantly wolfish. "Some time, Babs. But now get this and get it good. Whatever happens, whatever you see or hear or feel, no matter how it surprises you, don't scream."

He got to his feet, and she too rose from the bench. "Shall I walk through the yard with you? Down behind the arbor, maybe?"

Temptation made Mike hesitate. "Not this time, dearest. Old Polt is laying low for the time being, and let's not rile him up."

On his way home, Mike stopped at the hardware store to purchase a ladder. He tied it to the roof of his battered car, and then before driving on, he crossed the street to the drugstore.

#

It had been fun at first, before she realized the danger, when she had the strange power instead of it having her.

She had been a brat then, awkward and flat-chested and inclined to giggle. Mike had noticed her only casually, as a brat who in a couple of years might be worth looking at, but he still gave himself credit for having a most discerning eye.

From younger kids he heard strange stories about her, stories his superior age and wisdom dismissed as unmitigated hogwash.

A teacher had unfairly and sarcastically scolded her before the entire class. Babs had returned to her seat fuming with impotent rage, and had whispered to the girl beside her, "I'll fix her! I'll fix her good!"

And something had fixed the teacher. Her glasses had splintered against the blackboard. A bottle of ink had thrown itself into her face. And when she jumped up with a shriek, her chair had hurled itself against the back of her legs and knocked her sprawling.

Babs Mitchell had smiled.

There had been other incidents, not so spectacular but enough to set the other children talking.

And then one afternoon on his way home, Mike Hardy had heard sobs from a patch of woods beside the road. He had found the girl lying on the coarse, untended grass, her face hidden in her arms. She had jerked convulsively in sudden panic as he knelt and touched her, too disturbed even to pull down her twisted skirt.

"I didn't do it! Not this time! I didn't! I didn't! I didn't!" she had wailed. "I didn't start it and I couldn't stop it. It did it, because it wanted to!"

Between sobs he had heard her story. A boy had been riding past on a bicycle. A piece of wood the size of a broom stick had, for no apparent reason, flown through the air and jammed in the spokes of the front wheel. The boy had been so badly skinned up in the fall, that a passing motorist had taken him to a doctor.

There had been no witnesses, and the boy himself hadn't known what happened. But Babs had known.

"Impossible. You're just imagining it," Mike had said. And then, feeling sorry for the poor, hysterical girl, he had put an arm around her.

She hadn't minded, but something else had. For three days he had carried a lump on his head where the rock had hit him, and he no longer believed poltergeists impossible. There hadn't been another human within throwing range.

It wasn't funny any more.

#

After that first test of strength, the poltergeist had been in complete control. From then on the girl had been only a nucleus around which it centered its unpredictable, unpleasant, destructive and sometimes dangerous tricks. Babs had had no further power over its activities and its periods of quiescence.

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A few months later, Babs had left school by request. No reason was given, but she had known. And so, by that time, had her parents.

Mr. Mitchell, once the proof of the poltergeist's existence had become so overwhelming, it could no longer be denied, had spared no trouble and expense in his efforts to get rid of it. For the poltergeist was disrupting his only daughter's entire life. It was making his wife miserable, and she in turn was making him miserable. A poltergeist was not a suitable adjunct to gracious living.

One after another, psychic investigators came, found their manipulations useless or worse, and went away. A priest was brought in, but he made the mistake, while holding his crucifix and chanting his rites of exorcism, of turning his back on the sideboard in which the table silver was kept. Forks flew like darts, and he departed with travail in his soul and multiple stab wounds in his buttocks.

A subsequent investigator had spoken learnedly of the nature of poltergeists, how they were elementals not organized to differentiate between good and evil, and so were seldom subject to religious exorcism. But he too had been unable to offer positive help.

The poltergeist was not in the least shy, and Mr. Mitchell had finally been forced to surround his house with a high board fence to discourage curiosity seekers. The Mitchells had attained to considerable unwelcome notoriety, for it isn't every family had -- or is had by -- a genuine poltergeist.

Babs Mitchell lived a lonely, unhappy, uneasy life. She had no way of knowing at what moment Old Polt would break loose, or what the poltergeist would do. There were many activities in which she dared not engage, because Old Polt made them too dangerous to other people although he never harmed her directly.

Boys found her attractive only from a distance. Any display of affection seemed to arouse the poltergeist, and this made her definitely not neckable. Soon the boys learned to stay away.

All but Mike. He was stubborn and he carried a grudge against Old Polt for that lump on his head, and furthermore something about Babs kept him coming back in spite of everything Old Polt and Mrs. Mitchell could do. There was always hope.

#

The muffled alarm clock under his pillow broke Mike's doze. Midnight. He came fully awake at once, his body beginning to tingle with excitement and anticipation and a sense of impending adventure. No matter what happened, this would be a night to remember.

But if Old Polt got wise too soon --

And Old Polt wasn't all. Mr. Mitchell would be bad enough if things went wrong, but Mrs. Mitchell would be sheer atomic-powered murder. Even law-trouble was possible; Babs was barely sixteen.

But it was worth the risk. And Babs might be freed forever from the damned thing that had ridden her to the verge of a breakdown.

The Mitchell's house was dark and silent, as he had hoped, and the gate in the high board fence was closed as usual. He set down the ladder and made a complete circuit of the fence, keeping his ears tuned for the slightest noise. Occasionally he peered through cracks between the boards but there were no lights, and the only sounds came from crickets and an occasional night bird.

Mike waited, controlling mounting impatience, until the thin, waning crescent moon disappeared behind the hills. Poltergeists, according to everything he had read and seen and what Babs had told him, were worst under a high, waxing moon. But that was no guarantee; Old Polt was a particularly active and alert poltergeist, moon or no moon.

Finally he slanted the ladder against the fence, balanced himself on top as he tilted it, and climbed down inside. He waited for the accelerated thud-thud-thud of his pulse to stop hammering in his ears before approaching the house.

Only the stars watched him set the ladder against the sill of a certain window and start climbing.

He moved rapidly now. He knew what had to be done, and that it had to be done fast if at all. Old Polt was usually quiescent while Babs was asleep and it took him a few seconds after her awakening to become dangerously active.

During those few seconds - - -

Crash!

"God Almighty Damn! It's started again!" a man's voice roared through the house.

Bash! Smash! A clatter and jangle from the kitchen as pots and pans left their places.

"Look out, Margo!" the man's voice rose in sudden urgency.

A woman screamed. Then: "Oh My God! The new radio!"

"Just be glad it didn't -- Ouch!"

Lights went on. Ceiling lights. Old Polt found table lamps too convenient.

Crash-splinter-tinkle-tinkle!

"What happened then?" the woman shouted, her voice pitched high to carry through the noise of sliding furniture and insanely slamming doors.

"A ladder from somewhere broke through the sun porch windows!"

From deep below, the floor came a rumbling and a shriek of tortured metal as the furnace, fortunately with no fire in it, was wrenched out of shape and wrecked. For a moment the entire house seemed to teeter and dance on its foundations.

Then:--

Silence.

Complete and sudden silence.

#

Two pairs of footsteps came up the stairs.

"That was the worst ever." The woman's voice was still trembling.

"God, yes!" her husband agreed grimly. "It almost brought the roof down on our heads. I could have, if it hadn't stopped just when it did."

The woman knocked on a bedroom door.

"Barbara! Barbara! Are you all right?"

"Yes, mother. I'm perfectly all right. Please go on back to bed."

Mrs. Mitchell tried the knob, then shook it.

"Barbara! How dare you lock your door against your own mother?" she called in sudden outrage. "You get right up and open it. I want to see you're all right." Aroused parenthood speeded her recovery from fright.

"No, mother. Everything is quiet now. You don't want it to start again do you?"

"God forbid!" the man said hurriedly. "Come on, Margo."

Reluctantly, the woman let herself be led away.

#

They had overslept and the sun was already high. Mike peered down and decided a jump would be inviting a broken leg.

"Guess I should have tied the top of the ladder," he said ruefully. "Oh, well. We'd have had to face them anyhow, sooner or later."

The girl looked frightened. "Thy're going to be in a fine shape. Especially, Mother."

Mike grinned. "You're telling me? But how about you? I mean, how do you really feel? Guilty or anything like that?"

Babs shook her head. "Absolutely not. Happy, that's how I feel."

Quickly Mike crossed the room to her side. "Did you notice how suddenly all that commotion stopped?" he asked.

For a moment the worried look left her face, and she smiled impishly. "Yes, in spite of everything else that was happening just then. And did you notice just when it stopped? Neither Old Polt nor I had the slightest notion what was happening until it was too late -- for him."

He grinned very widely and helped her fasten her brassier --- after first pushing it aside and bending to kiss one pink nipple.

"But I'm still afraid of what Mother--"

His grin became cockier and more impudent than ever. "I've a hunch I can handle her just as effectively as we handled Old Polt."

She looked at him doubtfully.

"Even if she is tougher than Old Polt himself."

#

They didn't have long to wait. Babs was just finishing her hair when her mother knocked on the door again.

"Barbara, it's past time for you to get up."

Mike gave the girl a reassuring squeeze.

"Here goes," he whispered, and opened the door.

Mrs. Mitchell tried to scream, but she had to gasp three times before she could produce a recognizable word.

"You!" she said then. "What -- are -- you -- doing -- here?"

Before he could answer she called loudly, "Charles! Come here at once!"

Mr. Mitchell appeared, lather still covering one side of his face. "What is it, Marge?" Then his eyebrows shot up.

"He was in Barbara's bedroom!" Mrs. Mitchell exploded. "Do something!"

Quickly Mike drew himself up, attempting to look portly and dignified. He stroked a nonexistent beard that on Dr. Kalterglotz, the psychic investigator, was actual.

"The poltergeist," he announced portentously, "has been laid."

The girl, beside him made a quick, uncontrollable sound between a titter and a giggle.

Both parents glanced at her, quickly, and then with increased attention. She looked tired and her eyes were still sleepy. But somehow it was a contented tiredness that fitted her faintly enigmatic smile and air of excitement.

"The poltergeist is--" Mr. Mitchell began incredulously.

"Gone," Mike corrected his unintentional pun. "Old Polt will be somewhere out in the nowhere until he finds another nucleus for his--"

"You were in my daughter's bedroom all night?" Mrs. Mitchell broke in accusingly.

"Most of it," Mike admitted.

"Oh! And you dare stand there brazenly and --"

Mr. Mitchell whistled in sudden surprised understanding. "So that's why the poltergeisting stopped so suddenly last night, and why you think it's gone for good!"

His wife gave him a puzzled and angry glare.

"Poltergeist activities," he explained as soothingly as possible, "almost invariably center around adolescent virgins."

Mrs. Mitchell did manage to scream this time, and throw her arms around the girl. "Oh, my poor, poor, poor daughter!" she lamented.

Then across Bab's shoulder she addressed Mike. "You brute! You monster! You ravisher! You -- you sneaking rapist!" she hissed.

"Mama! It wasn't rape at all!" Babs protested. "And it was the only cure. Mike found it when nobody else could."

But the older woman seemed not to hear. "I'll have you run out of town! I'll see you're put in prison for the rest of your natural life!"

Mike was not properly intimidated.

"Wait a minute, Mrs. Mitchell. There's something else about poltergeist possession. Something that concerns you rather intimately."

Mrs. Mitchell stared at him, suddenly uneasy at his lack of repentance.

"Poltergeist possession is almost always hereditary, passing from mother to daughter," Mike went on. "It affects girls from puberty, usually starting about the time their breasts begin to develop, until they are either fully mature, or until they are no longer virginal. You're Babs' mother, and yet you never said anything about--"

Babs giggled then. "My mama! I never guessed!"

Mrs. Mitchell sputtered and her face reddened.

"Where did you get that idea, boy?" Mr. Mitchell demanded sharply.

Mike took a quick, shrewd guess at the details.

"I know you and Mrs. Mitchell were both raised in this town; your families were neighbors. And the kids nowadays still swim naked in Wright's Pool up the river, just as they've done for years and years. And kids that age sometimes--"

"But -- but -- but," Mrs. Mitchell stammered. "Charles! Do something!" She looked imploringly at her husband.

But his indignation had evaporated. Instead there was a far-away-and-long-ago twinkle in his eyes. Then he chuckled at his wife, his amusement mixed with tenderness and deep affection. Gently, he put an arm around her shoulders. "He's right, dear. No poltergeist ever had much chance to use you as its nucleus. Not after one day --"

"Charles! Not in front of--"

"Remember?" he asked softly.

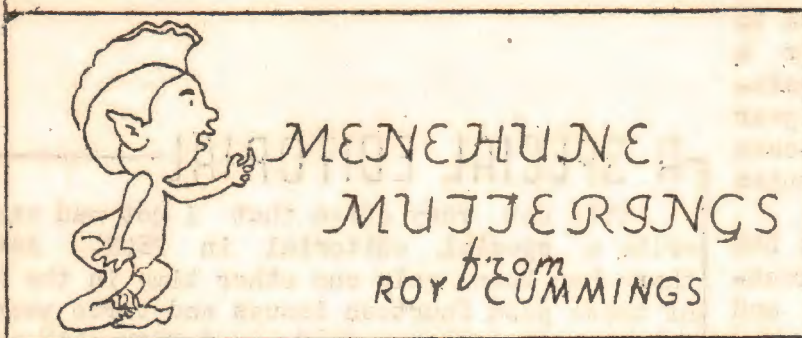
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The doorbell rang. Mrs. Mitchell pulled away from her husband.

"Oh heavens! It's those two professors, back for more investigation. What can we possibly tell them?"

Mr. Mitchell and Mike Hardy glanced at each other. Mike shook his head over so slightly.

((CONTINUED ON PAGE 25))



The promise, at the end of last issue's PEON was that this issue would carry a further dissertation upon the Menehune, those legendary little folk of Hawaii, whose name the modern Menehune of Hawaii have assumed. But as these things sometimes happen, the material gathered some time ago, tucked away in scraps of paper here and there and carefully filed away in folders and books, has eluded search and cannot be found.

It would be possible to put down a few items that were tucked away in the back of the mind, such as the fact that some historians of Hawaiiana claim that the Menehune were the progenitors of the Polynesian race; that some say the Menehune pre-dated the Polynesian race; that evidence of Col. James Churchward and others shows that a race of little people gradually worked their way across the Pacific from somewhere in the Malay peninsula.

But I would rather

that these scraps of Menehune lore be assembled and put into some satisfactory form; a readable, more logical article. So I shall save it, and, I hope, be able to do the assembling by press time of the next PEON. Of the modern Menehune, and by that I refer to us of Hawaii who are interested in fantasy and science-fiction, we have some news that may be of interest to the mainland readers of PEON.

We'll omit remarks about Editor Riddle, who is as busy as a bird dog in a game reserve. What with putting out the first issue of "Menehune Book News" for his expanding book service to us Hawaii folk, assuming a new post with N3F, and wrapping up PEON every so often, he scarcely has time to work for Uncle Sugar. But he'll probably tell you about it in his Editor's Notes so we'll let it go at that.

Dianetics, which apparently has caused somewhat of a sensation on the mainland has brought

its impact to these lovely islands as well. Whenever one or more of the Menehune meet they seem eventually to come to the subject. Mostly there has been a lot of talk, but no action, until Steve Lee, one of the later members of the Menehune, came back from New Jersey recently. He is a certificated auditor and a graduate of the Foundation there. Under his guidance a large number of local Honoluluans, not all science fiction fans, have organized a local department, and are well on the way in their work in Dianetics.

Shirley Rubin took off for a short vacation in Los Angeles, and should be back by the time PEON hits the mimeograph roller.

Eric Fennel, our only known science fiction author in the Hawaiian archipelago, has a story in the current Blue Book. Although not s.f. it is a fast moving job about steel workers, drawn upon Eric's extensive background as a structural engineer.

More of our mainland readers may know the name of Paul W. Skeeters who had a ad in the last FANTASY ADVERTISER, trying to sell a big chunk of his rather large collection of fantasy and science-fiction, both books and magazines. Paul, who taught on the

big island (Hawaii) last year, is coming back to the islands a f t e r a short stay on the mainland, to teach this year at Waipahu, a sugar-cane town about 30 minutes from Honolulu.

He's bringing some 500 volumes of his collection to the islands and will easily make everyone else here (except possibly Editor Riddle, who has the largest collection of magazines on the island) look sick when it comes to collector's items. Here's a tip for island collectors, however. Paul is going to concentrate on weird, supernatural and horror stuff, and may be in the market for disposal of some of his science-fiction stuff or for trading it for something he wants in his field.

With Mike Fern, who has deserted the Garden Island (Kauai) temporarily to make Honolulu his home for a while, and Eric Holmes returning from Stanford University soon, Paul makes a trio of newcomers to the Menehune tribe in Honolulu.

Next week, possibly while you are reading this, the Menehune will be gathering at my house up on the slopes of Punchbowl. We'll be eating Dagwood hamburger sandwiches and potato salad and drinking beer.

ish you could be with us.

A SPECIAL EDITORIAL

It's not very often that I get mad enough to write a special editorial in PEON. Actually, there has been only one other time in the history of these past fourteen issues and three years that I have bothered the readers of PEON with an editorial, but I feel that it is high time for another one.

Several days ago, I received in the mails, a fanzine, "INCINERATIONS-from effigy" (what ever that means). The 'zine is mimeographed rather neatly, and is published by the Grape Press, 9109 SW Oleson Road, Portland 19, Oregon. On the whole it contains good reading, but the article I'm writing about, reproduced on the opposite page, left me with a foul taste in my mouth.

Now, I'm not a very religious person any more. Our family Bible is on my desk, to be sure, but rare is the occasion that its pages are opened and read. There are too few things that I hold to these days, but one of them is the Word of God, and I see red when I hear it attacked and derided as it is in this article.

If the writer was trying to be funny, he certainly didn't succeed. If he was writing his sincere beliefs, it doesn't belong in a fanzine. The article itself is in evident poor taste, and I am sure that the nameless editor didn't know exactly what he was permitting to be published in his magazine.

I'm reproducing the article herewith, with my apologies. It is in PEON, to show you what some writers are turning out these days. You have a cordial invitation to comment on this article, and if you wish, my remarks above. The most interesting letters will be published in PEON in the next issue, and if you wish, I'll be more than happy to forward your letters or copies thereof, to the editor of "INCINERATIONS-from effigy."

BY THE EDITOR

FANTASY BOOK REVIEW

THE HOLY BIBLE

By God. Warner Press. \$5.00

A collection of the songs, stories, jokes and essays of Yawveh Sabaoth, the majority of which are apparently ghost-written, The Holy Bible relates in a spasmodic fashion the struggle of the protagonist, Lucifer, a revolutionist, against the high-handed, arbitrary rule of the Hebrew tyrant, Lord Jehovah, a capitalist bogey of the first order. Exiled for his part in a abortive attempt to overthrow Lord Jehovah, Lucifer resorts to cold-war tactics and begins an underground movement to convert the followers of Jehovah to dialectic materialism. His efforts to subvert Lord Jehovah's subjects meet with so much success that the Hebrew tyrant is forced to resort to such cavalier measures as flooding the Tigris-Euphrates valley to a depth of several feet and firing the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah to discourage further apostasy.

Although apparently beaten, Lucifer's cause is aided for an unexpected quarter; J. Christ, an itinerant carpenter claiming descent from a Hebrew warlord, takes up the cudgel on behalf of Lucifer's neo-marxist economic and political philosophy until he is finally silenced by reactionary Hebrew poer-politicians.

In typographical format, this book leaves much to be desired. The intramarginal numbering and the apparently random italicizing of words hinder the readability to the point of illegibility. Particularly to be deplored is the editorial interpretation of the text at the top of each page, which, in one instance, classes the Old Testament "Song of Solomon", an entertaining sex ditty, as "Christ's Love for the Church."

On the whole, this book is not a must for your fantasy library. It can be easily laid down once picked up, and will not keep the reader awake at night unless he is easily titillated by dirty stories. This book is not listed in the Checklist, and may be valuable as a collector's item, but unless he has a taste for incoherent and pornographic communist propaganda, the general reader can do without it very easily.

-- e.a. farbotnik

THE WEAVERS

In a distant mountain fastness
where no man shall ever be,
Sits a dim and cloaded figure,
weaving on a tapestry.

Great and intricate that product
of this genius' many skills,
Never starting, never ending,
old as --- older than --- the hills.

Even he cannot remember
when he first began to work;
Long before the stars and planets
formed from foggy, cloudy murk.

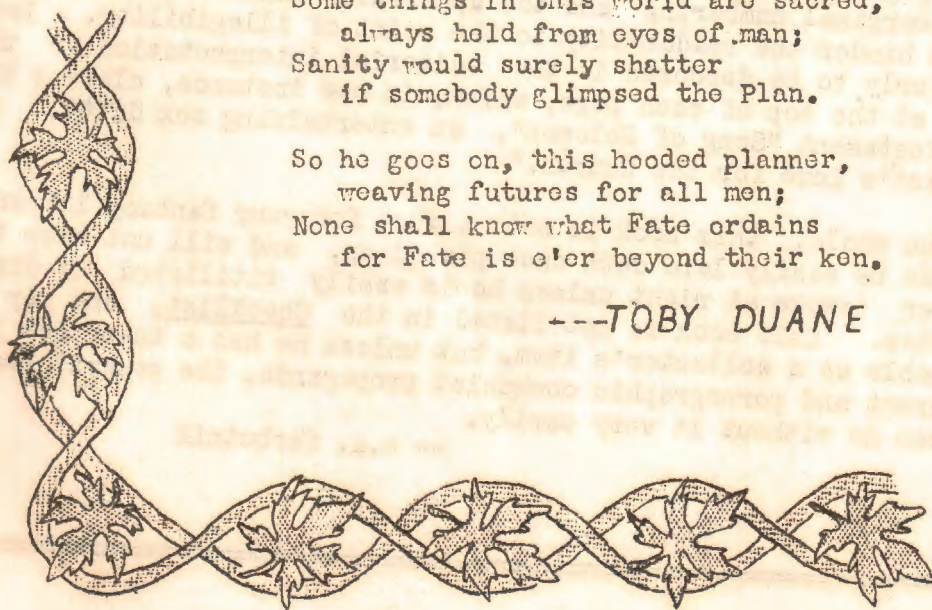
Section after section shapes
beneath his skillful, cautious touch;
War and famine, peace and plenty,
here he weaveth all of such.

You can't see him mold the future,
you can't read about the past;
If you did, then you'd be struck at once
with one huge lightning blast.

Some things in this world are sacred,
always held from eyes of man;
Sanity would surely shatter
if somebody glimpsed the Plan.

So he goes on, this hooded planner,
weaving futures for all men;
None shall know what Fate ordains
for Fate is e'er beyond their ken.

---TOBY DUANE



A Tentative Checklist of Fantasy Operas - (3)

anthony boucher

17

((EDITOR'S NOTE:::::This is the third and last in a series of a listing of Fantasy Operas, begun in the May issue of PEON. Mr. Boucher states that the listing is far from complete, and that he would be very happy to receive additions and corrections thereto. Please address him c/o PEON.))

ORDER OF INFORMATION:::Original title (translation if necessary) - Date of first production - original language - (nature of fantasy theme--not given if clear from title)

MARKS IN FRONT OF LISTING:

No mark-very slight fantasy content	No mark - rarely or never produced now
f -marked fantasy content	
ff -very strong fantasy content	* - produced occasionally (by small groups or in Europe)
	** - more or less standard American repertory

Massenet, Jules (1842-1912)

f Le jongleur de Notre Dame (Our Lady's juggler) 1902, French
Le mage (The magician) (I am unable to find any details beyond the title--and an unhelpful record by Agustarello Affre)
Panurge (again an untraceable Massenet, but based on Rabelais)

Menotti, Gian-Carlo (1911-)

ff ** The medium 1947, English (Fake seance turns real)

Meyerbeer, Giacomo (1791-1864)

ff Robert le diable (Robert the devil) 1831, French (Devil is hero's father; much wild magic throughout)

Milhaud, Darius (1892-)

Christophe Colomb 1930, French (mystic symbolism)
Les malheurs d'Orphee (The sorrows of Orpheus) 192-, French
"Minute-operas" (designed to fit on both sides of a 12-inch record); all 1927, French:
L'abandon d'Ariane (The desertion of Ariadne)
La deliverance de Thesee (The saving of Theseus)
L'enlevement d'Europe (The abduction of Europa)

Monteverdi, Claudio (1567-1643)

ff * Orfeo 1607, Italian

Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus (1756-1791)

- * Bastien und Bastienne 1768, German (mock magic)
- f ** Don Giovanni 1787, Italian
- f * Idomeneo, re di Creta (Idomeneus, king of Crete) 1781, Italian
- ff ** Die Zauberflöte (The magic flute) 1791, German

Mussorgsky, Modest Petrovich (1838-1881)

- ** Boris Godunov 1874, Russian (miracle, visions)
- * Khovanshchina 1885, Russian (divination, prophecy)

Nessler, Victor (1841-1890)

- f Der Pfeiffer von Hamelin (The piper of Hamelin) 18-- , German

Offenbach, Jacques (1819-1880)

- ff ** Les contes d'Hoffmann (The tales of Hoffmann) 1851, revised 1881, French. (Unquestionably the most magnificently fantastic of all operas, with too many themes to enumerate)

Peri, Jacopo (1561-1633)

- f Euridice 1600, Italian

Prokofiev, Sergei (1891-)

- ff * (The love for three oranges) 1921, Russian (fairy-tale)

Puccini, Giacomo (1858-1924)

- * Suor Angelica (Sister Angelica) 1918, Italian (miracle)
- f Le villi (The Willys) 1884, Italian (water sprites of dead souls)

Purcell, Henry (1658-1695)

- f * Dido and Aeneas 1689, English (witchcraft)
- f King Arthur 1691, English

Rabaud, Henri (1873-)

- * Marcuf 1914, French (Arabian nights, Djinni)

Ravel, Maurice (1875-1937)

- ff * L'enfant et les sortilèges (The child and the spells) 1925, French (magic in the nursery)

Respighi, Ottorino (1879-1936)

- ff La campana sommersa (The sunken bell) 192-, Italian (based on the play by Gerhardt Hauptmann)

Reyer, Ernest 1823-1909)

- Salammbô 1890, French (based on the Flaubert novel)
 f * Sigurd 1884, French (different version of same plot as Wagner's Ring)

Ricci, Luigi & Federico

- ff Crispino e la comare (Crispin & the fairy godmother) 18-- , Italian

Rimsky-Korsakov, Nikolai (1844-1908)

R-K deserves a particular niche as the specialist in fantasy opera. Almost all of his operas are fantasies--pure fairy tales or skazki. and perhaps it's the peculiar logic of fantasy that makes them almost the only well-constructed Russian operas. All fairy-tales, all in Russian are:

- f May Night 1880
 f Mlada 1892
 ff * Sadko 1897
 ff * Snegurochka (The snow maiden) 1892
 f (The tale of the invisible city of Kitezh)
 f * (The tale of Tsar Saltan)
 ff ** Zolotoy pyetushok (The golden cockerel) 1910

Ritter, A. (-)

- f Der faule Hans (Lazy Johnny) 1892, German (fairy tale)

Rossini, Gioacchino (1792-1868)

- f Semiramide 1823, Italian (ghost)

Rousseau, Jean Jacques (1712-1778)

Le devin du village (The village soothsayer) 1752, French (same plot as Mozart's B & B)

Rubinstein, Anton (1830-1894)

- ff * Deomon 1875, Russian (Tortured demon seeks pure human love)

Schillings, Max von (1868-1933)

- f Moloch 1906, German (Carthaginian magic in Thule)

Schumann, Robert (1810-1856)

- f Genoveva 18-- , German (ghost)

Strauss, Richard (1864-1949)

- f Die aegyptische Helena (The Egyptian Helen) 1928, German
 f, * Ariadne auf Naxos (Ariadne on Naxos) 1912, German
 f Daphne 1938, German
 Feuersnot (Dearth of fire) 1901, German (magic-cum-sex)

Stravinsky, Igor (1882-)

- f * Solovyei (The nightingale) 1923, Russian (Chinese magic)

Taylor, Deems (1885-)

- The king's henchman 1927, English (magic)
 ff Peter Ibbetson 1931, English

Thomas, Ambroise (1811-1896)

- f * Hamlet 1868, French

Verdi, Giuseppe (1813-1901)

- ** Un ballo in maschera (A masked ball) 1859, Italian (witchcraft)
 * Don Carlos 1867, French (ancestral ghost)
 ** La forza del destino (The force of destiny) 1862, revised 1869,
 Italian (fate)
 ff * Macbeth 1847, Italian
 ** Rigoletto 1851, Italian (curse)

Wagner, Richard (1813-1883)

- ff Die Feen (The fairies) 1883, German
 ff * Der fliegende Hollander (The flying Dutchman) 1843, German
 ff ** Lohengrin 1850, German
 ** Parsifal 1882, German
 ff ** Der Ring des Nibelungen (The Nibelungen Ring) 1876, German:
 Das Rheingold (The Rhinegold) 1869
 Die Walkure (The Valkyrie) 1870
 Siegfried 1876
 Gotterdammerung (Twilight of the Gods) 1876
 ff ** Tannhauser 1845, revised 1861, German
 ** Tristan und Isolde 1865, German

Wagner, Siegfried (1871 -)

- ff Der Barenhauser (The man in the bearskin) 1899, German (The Devil
 and St. Peter on earth)

Wallace, William Vincent 1812-1865)

- f Lurline 18-- , English (water fay)

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 25)

THE ANNALS OF AARDVARK

—by—

A. Aaron Aardvark, III

The six words of the next paragraph will constitute deliberate commission of heresy, barratry, treason and the misprision thereof, sacrilege, aggravated assault (we will omit the battery because the character in question wouldn't know how to hook up a battery) and sundry high crimes and misdemeanors. Here goes:

Ray Bradbury should hire a collaborator.

There! I've said it and I ain't sorry yet. And if a bomb arrives in my mail, I shall at least have the faint satisfaction of knowing, as it plasters the bloody shreds of that used to be me against the walls, that Bradbury didn't build the bomb himself. He obviously doesn't have the technical savvy.

Ray Bradbury, in posing as a science-fiction writer, is committing a fraud and operating under false pretenses. In all his work of recent years (certainly I read Bradbury; everybody reads Bradbury, albeit sometimes with twinges of nausea) there is not a single genuine science-fiction story. He is perpetrating sheer fantasy, and through a tour de force of perverted genius conning it off on editors and the public as the real McCoy.

For genuine science--fiction, some science is essential. And the internal evidence of Bradbury's work shows incontrovertibly that

the man is a mechanical moron, an engineering imbecile and an astronomical ignoramus; who knows no practical physics; whose chemistry is a stench and an abomination; and whose rudimentary notions of electronics are badly short-circuited.

The guy just ain't no scientist of no sort nohow, and this fact he is unable to hide under a flow of pretty words even though he is unquestionably a genius of the Saroyan class.

Furthermore, because he is a fast-working genius whose tremendous sometimes makes me suspect him of being a factory rather than an individual, he apparently never bothers to go back and catch up on the technical boners and inconsistencies. He just doesn't seem to give a damn.

Then reading a Bradbury yarn, one is liable to encounter a character who "gazes through the thin, clear air at the far-off horizon of Mars." The details seem to indicate that a Martian horizon is more distant than an Earth horizon. Bradbury has evidently never bothered to look up the diameter of Mars and make a few line-of-sight calculations. And his Earthmen on Mars -- likewise without the slightest attempt at consistency and strictly according to Bradbury mood of the moment -- either walk and carry burdens as they would do on Earth, or go about jumping like jet-propelled kangaroos. That's he got there? Variable gravity?

These bloopers, for the technically trained reader, have an emotional effect disconcertingly like finding half a worm in a partly eaten apple. They spoil one's taste for the rest.

This would not be such a sad befouling of the fair name of science-fiction if Bradbury were merely a low-grade hack. Then he

could be ignored. But that man--although like Saroyan he knows only one plot and has only one set of characters, all of whom resemble each other and Bradbury--can spin his yarn very entertainingly. Like Saroyan, he can set up a terrific illusion of "humanness" and "poignancy."

And he can sell that same story over and over and over again, and to all sorts of markets. His agent must be something of a hypnotist; perhaps a Martian.

So persons just becoming acquainted with the field are liable to accept Bradbury as a genuine science-fiction author. A mistake to be sure! And there is a grave peril that innocent young writers will take a look at Bradbury's sales record, decide they too want fishtail Cadillacs and private swimming pools, and try to follow the same pattern.

That would be tragic. There is room for one Bradbury, even tho his ideas of "science" have a mophitic reek. But one Bradbury is enough; a dozen would be as intolerable as a dozen Shavers.

Of course, Bradbury could take a few correspondence courses in basic sciences. But he won't, because he's a genius.

He should therefore have a collaborator. Or maybe a keeper. This individual would peer over his shoulder as he pounds his typewriter or (being a genius) scratches away with a quill from a wild goose. Whenever a scientific and/or technical inaccuracy appeared, it would be the keeper's duty to stop in with a firm "Nyah" before the rotten egg hatched into print.

But even such a collaborator/keeper wouldn't be able to make a technically accurate science-fict-

ion writer out of Bradbury, even though he could eliminate the more obvious blunders. Bradbury just doesn't have a scientific mind.

John W. Campbell, Jr. -- who, although he isn't God, has some fairly sound ideas about science-fiction --- maintains that the projection of current trends and developments into the future.

But Bradbury goes blithely ahead with his fantasies, paying no attention to current trends, and by ignoring certain inherently important factors creating unrealistic and far-fetched situations. He seems to have no understanding whatsoever of the tremendous mass of detail work involved in rigging the complex mechanisms he so casually dreams up, no conception of the man-hours and economics involved.

Thus he habitually has unskilled characters manage, despite shoestring economics and total lack of technical training, to invent and build extremely complex and delicate mechanisms. In one such store, believe it or not, he actually had a junk dealer power such a complex gizmo with half a dozen old automobile engines. Wow! Also Phew!

His humans on Mars, a peculiar and illogical breed, seem to spend at least 36 hours a day setting up extremely complicated and utterly pointless electronic circuits--merely to fulfill some whim. They aren't balanced humans at all, but monomaniacal psychopaths.

And these circuits last and last across the years, never breaking down, always ready to function despite their necessarily delicate adjustments. He is ignorant of, or has deliberately ignored, the basic

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 24)

MARGIE AND THE DRIBBLEFLIP --by ED LUDWIG

Here's a test of your stf and fantasy I.Q. In the following tale there are fifty titles of well-known stf, fantasy, and weird stories and books. How many can you discover? For every correct title--with name of its author--you get one point. Titles, authors, and the method of scoring are on page 26. Good luck!

This is the story of Margie and her Martian dribbleflip, Freddie.

Time and time again, Freddie, the restless dribbleflip, would meander out of the pannelled room in his house and to Margie's chagrin, go ambling across fields, ravines, and the green hills of Earth.

For a while, Margie sat with folded hands, hoping the dribbleflip would mend his ways, but one evening on the 31st of February, she realized that this solution was unsatisfactory.

She decided that as long as the dribbleflip acted like a gypsy, he would never gain maturity. Her mind was at the end of its tether.

"The little demon!" she called him. "Where does he think he's going--on a million-year picnic? I'll show him a thing or two!"

With a searching mind and a poker face that held all the cunning of the beast, she began her expedition. Hurriedly, lest darkness fall, she ran down the upper-level road until she reached the Mountains of Madness, but nowhere was the dribbleflip. He was, apparently, in hiding.

At last, at the 25th hour, she came to a cemetery. Save for the scittering of the graveyard rats, the silence was unbroken, and Margie felt as if she were standing on the brink of infinity.

"Freddie!" she cried, "Freddie Dribbleflip!"

The answer came abruptly:

Knock!

The sound at first seemed to come from way in the middle of the air, but then Margie realized it had originated in the vault to her left.

"Who goes there?" she cried.

Suddenly, like gnurrs coming from the woodwork out, Freddie bounded up out of the vault. He was a happy beast and grinning like a huckle.

"Quis Custodiet?" he teased.

Margie fumed. "Oh, you, you brat!" she screamed. "That settles it! You're going back to Mars--one way!"

Freddie paled. "N--No," he pleaded. "Not that! Make it far Centaurus or have the postman of Otford send me postpaid to Paradise, or even to the city of singing flame. But, please, not Mars!"

"I thought you said Mars is Heaven," Margie declared sternly.

"No, no, Ray Bradbury said that. Please, I'll do anything. I'll be a star-rover or a lobbie for Mr. Mergenthirker, or even a person from Porlock. But Mars is too dusty. It's the off season, and there isn't a single shottlebob on the whole planet."

"All right then," said Margie. "If you're good, you get a cask of Amontillado. If you're not, this is your farewell performance."

"I'll be good," said Freddie, meek as a star-mouse. "I'll put new foundations under my life. Never again will I make a blunder."

Hand in hand, Margie and Freddie strolled into a brave new world, never looking backward, and so our story has a happy ending after all.

-o-

THE ANNALS OF AARDVARK (continued from page 22)

engineering formulae for probability of malfunction, circuit entropy and deterioration of materials, to name only a few.

To any technician who has battled the inherent instabilities of any piece of complex electronic gadgeteering, Bradbury's machines are positively infuriating.

His people are likewise infuriating, because they frequently do not fit the situations in which he places them. In the much-reprinted MARS IS HEAVEN, for instance, a very expensive spaceship is turned over to a bunch of technical incompetents and psychological misfits

with unconscionably low emotional stability factors. The backers of that flight seem to have exercised less selectivity in choice of personnel than the average business firm uses in hiring typists and janitors.

But I'll keep on reading everything Bradbury publishes. There's a certain perverse fascination to the various versions of his one story, and besides I agree wholeheartedly with his vehement distaste for civilization circa 1950.

And furthermore, I'm curious to see what outlandishly unscientific notion he manages to perpetrate next.

WANTED

Old science-fiction magazines: Planet (any of the first five years); Super Science (any issue prior to revival). Will buy in groups or singly. Editor, PEON.

STORIES APPEARING IN THE STORY "Margie and The Dribbleflip" ON PAGE 23-24

(listed in order of their appearance in story)

1. Time and Time Again -- H. Beam Piper
2. The Panelled Room -- August Derleth
3. The Green Hills of Earth -- Robert Heinlein
4. With Folded Hands -- Jack Williamson
5. The 31st of February -- Nelson Bond (book)
6. Solution Unsatisfactory -- Anson McDonald
7. Gypsy -- Poul Anderson
8. Maturity -- Ted Sturgeon
9. Mind At The End of Its Tether -- H. G. Wells (book)
10. Call Him Demon -- Henry Kuttner
11. The Million-Year Picnic -- Ray Bradbury
12. And Searching Mind -- Jack Williamson
13. Poker Face -- Ted Sturgeon
14. The Cunning of The Beast -- Nelson Bond
15. Expedition -- Anthony Boucher
16. Lest Darkness Fall -- Boris Karloff (anthology)
17. The Upper Level Road -- Paul Ernst
18. At The Mountains of Madness -- H. P. Lovecraft
19. In Hiding -- Elmar Shiras
20. The 25th Hour -- Herbert Best
21. The Graveyard Rats -- Henry Kuttner
22. The Silence -- Ray Bradbury
23. The Brink of Infinity -- Stanley Weinbaum
24. Knock -- Frederic Brown
25. Day in the Middle of The Air -- Ray Bradbury
26. In The Vault -- H. P. Lovecraft
27. Who Goes There -- John W. Campbell
28. The Gnurrs Come From The Woodwork Out -- R. Bretnor
29. The Huckle Is A Happy Beast -- Ted Sturgeon
30. Quis Custodiet? -- Margaret St. Clair
31. Brat -- Ted Sturgeon
32. One Way To Mars -- Robert Bloch
33. Far Centaurus -- A. E. van Vogt
34. The Postman of Otford -- Lord Dunsany
35. Postpaid to Paradise -- Robert Arthur
36. The City of Singing Flame -- Clark Ashton Smith
37. Mars Is Heaven! -- Ray Bradbury
38. The Star Rover -- Jack London
39. Mr. Mergenthirker's Lobbies -- Nelson Bond
40. The Person From Porlock -- Raymond F. Jones
41. The Off Season -- Ray Bradbury
42. Shottle Bop -- Ted Sturgeon
43. The Cask of Amontillado -- E. A. Poe
44. Farewell Performance -- H. R. Wakefield
45. The Star Mouse -- Frederic Brown

- 46. New Foundations -- Wilmar H. Shiras
- 47. Bunder -- Philip Tyllie
- 48. Brave New World -- Aldous Huxley
- 49. Looking Backward -- Edward Bellamy
- 50. Happy Ending -- Henry Kuttner

....and now, your Score:

- 45-50: Excellent. Your name should be Forrest J. Ackerman.
- 40-44: Good. You probably beat Charles Lee Riddle.
- 35-39: Passing. We'll still call you a fan.
- 30-34: Not so hot. Better go back to Buck Rogers, bugeyes.
- 25-29: Tsk, tsk. Words fail me.
- Below 25: Why the hell did you even try to take this test?

PEON NOTES (continued from page 2)

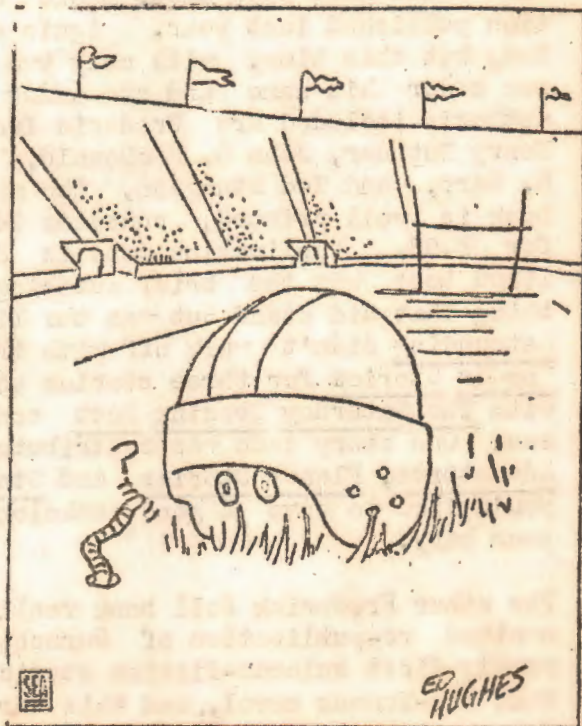
Although this is not exactly a book review, I think you ought to know about the two latest releases from Frederick Fell. Remember the good reading in Blieler and Dikty's compilation of the best science fiction stories of 1949 last year? Well, they've done it again this year, in the second volume in this annual series, entitled, The Best Science Fiction: 1950. The only thing wrong with the entire book is the unhandy title, but that is a minor item, to be sure. Thirteen stories, a good baker's dozen, are published this time, and while I could think of one or two stories that could have been used, these do represent a cross-section of the fiction published last year. Again as usual, Ray Bradbury is well-represented, but this time, with only two stories. Will F. Jenkins has two also, one under his name and one under his pen name, Murray Leinster. Other authors included are Frederic Brown, Robert Williams, Robert W. Kropps, Henry Kuttner, John D. MacDonald, Wilmar H. Shiras, Clifford Simak, Robert S. Carr, and Ted Sturgeon, the majority of them well known writers. The book is well printed, contains 341 pages of reading material, and sells for \$2.95. Publication date is September 12th. Probably the feature I liked best was the brief autobiographical sketch of each author. One thing that did stand out was the list of magazines represented. For once, Astounding didn't walk off with the whole book, but tied with Thrilling Wonder Stories for three stories each. The slicks came in for notice also with The Saturday Evening Post contributing two stories; and Blue Book, one. One story each was contributed by The Magazine of Fantasy, Fantastic Adventures, Planet Stories, and Startling Stories. (What no Amazing?) If you'd like to have a good anthology of the previous year's best, this is your baby.

The other Frederick Fell book really doesn't need comment. It's the long awaited re-publication of Gernsback's Ralph 124C 41 plus -- one of the really first science-fiction stories. You all know of the background of this now-famous novel, and this hard-cover publication will make it a must for the collectors. The price is only \$2.50, which isn't too bad. Got it by all means!

We're full of culture and recommendations today. If any of you have one of the long-playing record players and are building up a collection, I'd like to recommend one record that seems to be outstanding. Naturally, the records arrive out here quite sometime after they are on the market state-side, but if you haven't heard the London long-playing record #191, "Music of Spain," be sure to do so at your first opportunity. The quality of music on this recording is superb--the full frequency range recording is wonderful, and it really sounds beautiful. There are six pieces in all on this 12" l.p., comprising of Falla's "La Vida Breve"; "Spanish Dances Nos. 2, 5, and 6" by Granados; "La Procesion Del Rocio" by Turina; and Albeniz's "El Puerto y Triana". The price is only \$5.95, and I don't think you could go wrong.

It seems as if the month of August was a month of changes for the National Fantasy Fan Federation. Rick Sneary, president of the N3F, has had to fill several offices due to the resignations of r.t.Rapp, Harry Moore, Ev. Winne, and others. One of the appointments recently made was that of your editor of PEON to the office of Outer PRO. Primarily, this consists of coordinating the work of the various recruiters and help direct publicity for the N3F. Strange as it may seem to some people, especially those around the Los Angeles Area, the NFFF is an organization that I believe in, and one that I wish to help. And this appointment by Rick makes me rather proud. I've been for the NFFF ever since I've been a member, and will be as long as it or I exist. Now tell me--how many of you are members of this fine bunch of fans? I'd like to tell you more about it personally.....And to those of you who are already members, here's some advance dope about a recruiting contest which will be announced in the next issue of the National Fantasy Fan. A good prize will be awarded to the NFFF member who recruits the most new members during a two month period--six prizes a year. The first contest period will be from October 1st to November 30th, and the winner will have a choice of the following books: The Best Science Fiction Stories: 1950; Flight Into Space; or Omnibus of Time. Here's a chance to build up your personal book collection, so, if you are interested, contact me for recruiting blanks.....

Well, space is at an end for this issue of PEON, so I'll be leaving you until the next issue. Would like to know how you liked the lead story by Erik Fennel in this issue, as it is far different from any I've used before---- L E E



"Have they gone?"