

THE EYRIE

WE think we've said enough about that April issue, and now we shall talk of other matters. Suppose we discuss the poets? Since we began using verse in WEIRD TALES we have been bombarded with all manner of poetry, and most of it has been pretty bad, but occasionally something turns up in the mail that is really unusual. For instance, take this one from James F. Morton, Jr., of New York City. Mr. Morton accompanied his poem with a note, reading thus:

"Dear Mr. Baird: You are advancing from better to better, as the current WEIRD TALES shows. I am more than ever glad to do all I can to promote its circulation.

"I am glad to note that you will include poetry in future issues; and you begin well in the present one. I enclose an aspirant for admission. Please don't think I flatter you to gain acceptance for the offspring of my own brain; for I credit you with the sound and independent judgment to disregard personal considerations in weighing the merits of contributions offered. If you shoot this back to me, it won't make me a whit the less a booster for your magazine. If you accept it, I can't think more highly of W. T. than I already do; and I shall certainly not be likely to think less of it on that account! So take it or decline it; and we are friends in just the same degree."

Having printed the note, we shall now print the poem, though not because of the flattering things the note says of us. This poem strikes a weird chord that seems in harmony with our

style. It is called "Haunted Houses,"
and here it is:

Haunted houses, haunted houses! I can
see them in my sleep.
Hints of dark, unhallowed orgies make
my flesh begin to creep.
Sudden lights at darkened windows,
knocking on the floors and walls,
Sounds of wild, unearthly moaning,
phantom touches, mystic calls,
Rattling chains and groans of anguish,
charnel odors, shrieks of fear,
Rustling gowns and stealthy footfalls,
candles dimmed and peril near,
Clashing swords and falling corpses,
steps upon the creaking stair,
Chairs upset and toppling tables, thrills
of terror everywhere,
Bed by ghostly fingers shaken, bed-
clothes plucked by unseen hands,
Lamplight suddenly extinguished, as
the unknown Will commands,
Words of ghastly import whispered,
noises of no mortal source,
Frightful knowledge of the presence of
a dire, resistless force,
Faces in the darkened corners, forms
beyond all speech uncouth,
Eld unreverend and loathsome, hell-
marked childhood, sin-stained youth,
Bullet holes in pallid foreheads, bleed-
ing breasts and throats agape,
Eyes in dreadful frenzy rolling, lips
with mow of demon-ape,
Bony hands that slowly, sternly beckon,
though no word is said,
Till we needs must rise and follow, at
the bidding of the Dead,
While our ghastly leader ever moves
with spectral glide before,
Till we gain the place that covers foul
or nameless deed of yore;
Ever striving to our vision some grim
secret to disclose,
That the task may be accomplished,
which shall bring at last repose.
If we win, a soul is ransomed; if we
falter, all is lost;
If we fail to read the secret, we must
pay the fearful cost.
For the wight who rashly enters, looms
the madhouse or the tomb;
Venture not in haunted houses, lest you
meet a fearful doom.

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168 North Michigan Blvd., Chicago, Ill.