

WONDER STORIES

"The Magazine of Prophetic Fiction"



VOL. 7 **No. 4**
SEPTEMBER, 1935

Published by Continental Publications, Inc. H. Gernsback, President; I. S. Manheimer, Secretary. Publication Office, Myrick Building, 29 Worthington Street, Springfield, Mass. Editorial and General Offices, 99 Hudson Street, New York, N. Y.

WONDER STORIES—Monthly—Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Springfield, Mass., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Title registered U. S. Patent Office. Copyright, 1935, by Continental Publications, Inc. Text and Illustrations of this magazine are copyrighted and must not be reproduced without permission of the copyright owners. WONDER STORIES is published on the first of the preceding month, 12 numbers per year. Subscription price is \$1.50 a year in United States and its possessions. In foreign countries, exclusive of Canada, \$2.00 a year. Single copies, 15c. Address all contributions for publication to Editor, WONDER STORIES, 99 Hudson Street, New York. Publishers are not responsible for lost MSS. Contributions cannot be returned unless authors remit full postage.

WONDER STORIES is for sale at principal newsstands in the United States. IF YOU WISH TO SUBSCRIBE to WONDER STORIES, make out all remittances to the Continental Publications, Inc. Be sure to mention the name of magazine you wish to subscribe for, as we are also agents for the following magazines: RADIO-CRAFT and EVERYDAY SCIENCE AND MECHANICS. Subscriptions can be made in combination with the above publications at a reduced club rate. Ask for information. Subscriptions start with current issue unless otherwise specified.

WHEN YOUR SUBSCRIPTION EXPIRES, we enclose a renewal blank in the last number. No subscription continued unless renewal remittance is received.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS. Always give us old as well as new address and notify us as far in advance as possible.

Chicago Advertising Representative:

William H. Stewart, Inc.,
9 South Clinton Street.

Western Advertising Representative:

Lloyd B. Chappell,
811 So. Alexandria St., Los Angeles, Calif.

European Agent:

Gorrings's American News Agency,
9A Green St., Leicester Square,
London, W. C. 2, England.

Table of Contents

● EDITORIAL

WONDERS OF TRANSPLANTED ORGANS
by Hugo Gernsback 389

● COMPLETE STORIES

THE IDEAL *by Stanley G. Weinbaum* 416

ONE HUNDRED GENERATIONS *by Philip Jacques Bariel* 430

THE SPACE LENS *by Millard Verne Gordon* 452

● SERIAL NOVELS

WORLD OF THE MIST *by Laurence Manning* 390
(In Two Parts—Part One)

THE GREEN MAN OF GRAYPEC *by Festus Pragnell* 458
(In Three Parts—Conclusion)

● ARTICLES

Man Will Reach Moon 415

No People on Mars? 429

● DEPARTMENTS

Forthcoming Stories 491

Science Questions and Answers 494

The Science Fiction League 496

What is Your Science Knowledge? 499

The Reader Speaks 500

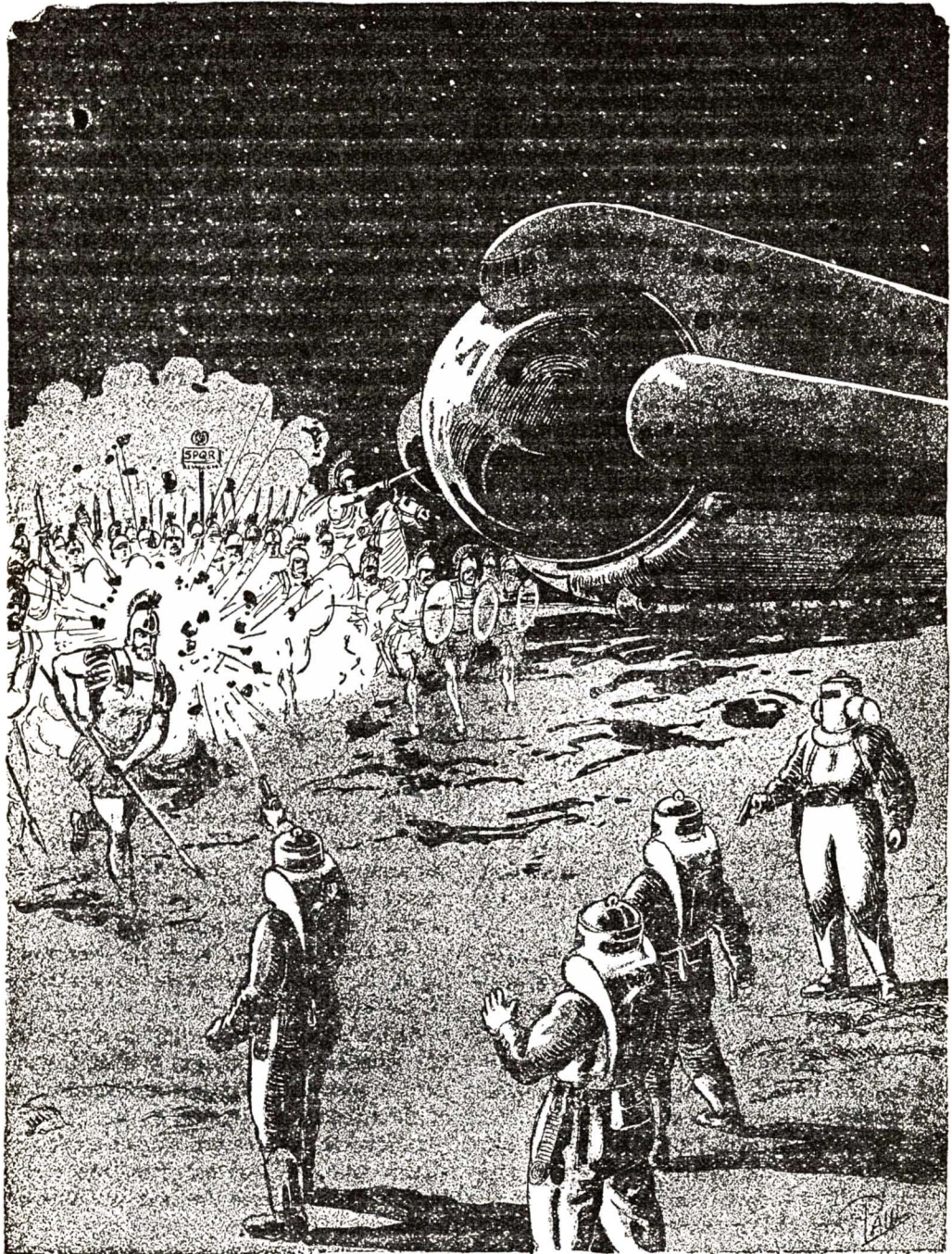
The Science Fiction Swap Column 510

● "IN MY OPINION"

Voting Coupon for Readers 493

● ON THE COVER

This month we find illustrated one of the conceptions of the most conceited scientist in the world—Haskel van Manderpootz, showing the mechanical equivalent of the predatory tiger—from "The Ideal" by Stanley G. Weinbaum. Cover by the famous Paul.



(Illustration by Paul)

Kendall swung up his explosion pistol and pulled the trigger. In the midst of the ranks, there was a terrific flare of light.

THE SPACE LENS

By MILLARD
VERNE GORDON

"Shouts of soldiers of nations long past and
Thunder of chariots resound afar.
All things no matter how small or unscanned
Reecho anew from each far off star."

—ROGER DAINTEH

● Over three thousand light years from their native planet, the crew of the *Astralite* finally began to show signs of home-sickness. As Fred Broster put it, "After all, we are earthmen and really never intended for this sort of interstellar wandering."

Doctor Seaward marvelled to himself that they had gone as far as they had before showing those symptoms—and especially after having so many odd adventures, each so different than any that would be encountered on Earth. The worlds of Neb, for example, offered a paramount study in unearthliness. After the charting of those bodies, it was truly a wonder that the men did not commence to look forward to home again as a relief from the constant monotony of the incredibly bizarre and undreamed of sights—and the other things, the Microcosmic Destruction they had witnessed around Spica, or the Illusion of Marilus, or even the great space warp they had encountered only a few hundred light years away from Sol—that great region roughly elliptical in shape, covering a vast area in space where, for some unaccountable reason, the ether had been strangely distorted and twisted so that the *Astralite* was hard put to ride the eka-gravity waves out of it. The doctor had then only found the pitch of this remarkable set of picked men but notched up a little higher. Now, however, they seemed to have reached their peak and reaction was setting in.

● Perhaps you are wondering why we are giving you the works of so many new authors lately. We'll tell you why. In our search for original, refreshingly different science-fiction, we have found a great reservoir of new ideas, themes, and developments in many authors who have never had any science-fiction published before. We are not surprised, therefore, that many of the first efforts we publish are acclaimed on an equal and even better than the stories of the "top-notchers."

After all, even the very best of authors had to have their first stories put into print. After a while, many of the old authors grow stale for ideas and their material becomes cobwebbed and falls into a rut.

So, here is some more new blood. You will find here an entirely original development of one of the most awe-inspiring conceptions of science.

Fred Broster leaned over the space-chart dreamily but half-seeing the moving red dot that was the ship on its course among the stars.

"At this time, it would be spring back in Delaware. The green grass would be growing, a warm breeze brushing through the trees, the birds flying north again, or resting and singing."

"And the apple trees are in bloom and the dandelions and wild flowers first showing their colors," murmured Kendall, resting on his elbows, staring out into the black void.

"And at night, the trilling of the crickets is everywhere, and the soft light of the moon in a deep blue sky shines over the waters of the lake," Arundell, who hailed from Chicago, mused while oiling the inductor coils.

"And out there, all around us, is nothing but blackness, almost vacuum, perhaps a few atoms of calcium scattered

about between the far off suns and occasional planet."

"And wandering comet or piece of cosmic dust," Broster cut in on Kendall's words.

"Oh, what's the use of this sort of talk, fellows," Seaward put in. "We've got to go on schedule."

"I guess so," agreed Arundell. "Still, it gets a fellow, sometimes."

"Earth seven years of the ship's travel away and three thousand of light's." Seaward was playing his part in keeping up the spirits of the crew. "What would the earth say if they knew you failed to carry your explorations to the limit? You volunteered and were picked from thousands of others for your positions here. If you don't go the limit, someone else will."

"And we've got over five years more outward travelling to go before turning back," voiced Broster. "God only knows—Hello, here's another of those d—d hunks of metal coming our way in an hour or so. About planetary size, I should judge."

"So what?" interjected Kendall with a slight yawn. "Just more trouble to be avoided."

"You boys are getting callous. A few years ago, you'd have been excited over that," the ship's physician and air-conditioning regulator remarked.

"What's there to get excited about? This is nothing much. We never land on these things any more after the first ten or so and finding them all alike. Just overgrown meteors."

Kendall, after making this remark, was silent. The rest remained likewise, each quiet in his own thoughts and contemplations.

Then Kendall stared a little harder out through the stella-quartzite window, focussed on something, and then turned around. He wheeled over the remarkable focus apparatus eyepiece of the electro-telescope built in the top of the *Astralite* and adjusted it on something outside. Then he peered through.

"Here's something new. This particular homeless chunk is brightly illuminated. It looks like a regular planet."

Broster and the others moved over to the speaker.

"How can it be lit? There's no star near enough to light it like a planet."

"See for yourself," Kendall commented in answer.

Surely enough, it was so. There out in the blackness of the void shone a tiny disc of light, unmistakably like that of a planet. And it was travelling its meaningless way all alone, unattended by moon or star—wandering through the void, as it probably had done for ages past.

"We'll land on that." Broster ordered, assuming the leadership that was his. "Got to explain the source of that illumination. May perhaps be that the whole thing is heavy with radioactive ore."

"Or a small sun itself," ventured Arundell, attending to the power switch.

"Couldn't be," returned the captain. "Not enough mass."

● Rapidly they drew closer. Travelling as they were with far greater than the speed of light and capable of almost infinite changes in speed and maneuvering, the great craft from the highly scientific world of 2935 neared the wanderer and veered in for a landing.

And the closer they came, the more mystifying and unusual was the world.

For about it, the closer they came, there seemed to be a vague familiarity—something that plucked at the memories stored away in the minds of all who viewed it that caused queer thoughts and spasms of nostalgic yearning to flow through them. There was something about this oncoming mass that was familiar.

They came nearer and nearer. The image in the lens of the viewing instrument became clearer. There crept into Kendall's mind a queer thought, an odd tantalizing thought, that seemed almost too foolish to repeat. Yet finally he blurted it out.

"It looks a devilish lot like the earth." The men straightened up sharply from

their instruments and looked at each other. Arundell slowly nodded assent, unwillingly, almost as if afraid to admit the resemblance.

"Nonsense," ejaculated Seaward. "You're letting your imaginations run away with you. Probably only a vague resemblance.

But he looked himself and thought that it did indeed look like their home world as seen from the Eastern hemisphere. It had a queer look, despite that. The middle and central portion of the disc was very clear and sharply defined. It resembled the basin of the Mediterranean Sea and its surrounding regions very markedly. But the outer edges of the disc were misty and distorted and blurred as if in poor focus. The doctor tried to focus the scope better, but he could not.

And finally they came so close that none could deny the similarity. It looked like the earth; it was the same size as the earth and it had the same continental markings as the earth.

"It's impossible," murmured one of the men. "Impossible."

"Yet I can make out Italy's boot and Sicily as plain as from the Moon. And the Caspian and Black Seas, and the Straits of Gibraltar and the Spanish Peninsula—they're all there," Arundell whispered in an awed tone.

"But Scandinavia and South Africa and Japan are all too blurred and vague to see—like they were only masses of mist. Only the central portion is visible," Kendall commented.

"We'll land and settle this monkey business once and for all," ordered Broster. "Back to your posts, men. Stand by for landing."

The remarkable ship slowed down tremendously. And yet there was no noticeable effect inside due to the eka-etheric inertia and mass controls. It swung in, steadily neared the surface, and headed for the Italy-shaped peninsula. As they came in within a few miles, they noted that as yet there was no sign of atmosphere. Apparently there was no air on this

world. Yet the light streamed down and appeared soft and mellowed as if it were passing through a layer of air.

Down the ship came. Below them the scene spread out—masses of green and brown land, stretches of blue water. Through the 'scope, Kendall made out waves breaking on sandy shores, forests quivering as if in a breeze. As he related what he saw, the men of the crew listened as if in a trance.

"Look! There's a house—another! A whole village! By God, this world is inhabited!" Kendall shouted in astonishment.

"I see figures," he shrieked a moment later. "Black figures running about. There's a whole lot of them coming up a stone road running through the fields around this village. Swarms of them. A regular army."

"Get back," roared Broster as someone made a movement to desert his post and see for himself through the telescope. "You'll see it when we land. Now attend to business before we crash."

The impatience of the men reached a fever heat as the moments went past and the ship lowered itself to the surface. Then it finally came to rest.

There was a concerted rush for the space-lock. But Broster barred the way.

"Stay back, you fools; there's no air on this world!"

"What!" There was an exclamation from them all.

"What! But we saw forests and men and everything. Look out the window now and see for yourself."

"Nevertheless, the indicator shows that there is no air on this planet." Broster pointed to the instrument set in the wall. The men stared at it in puzzled confusion.

"Put on your space-suits and carry full weapons and equipment," the captain ordered, proceeding to get into his own.

● In bewilderment, the men did likewise.

Then, after being fully helmeted and dressed like a group of four deep-sea divers, they stepped into the lock and on to the surface of the stellar wanderer.

Bursts of astonishment broke from their lips. For although they saw distinctly that they were stepping on thick lush grass and soft earth, the feel of it was that of hard, cold metal. And although all about them were signs of life, the waving branches of trees in the background, the flight of insects from flower to flower, the swift movements of birds, the scuttering dust blowing before a breeze along the stone road nearby, yet no sound broke upon their ears, no movement of air was felt by them. If they closed their eyes, they could imagine themselves on the barren surface of the moon. Yet open their eyes, and they found themselves standing on a scene of spring-time in Italy. It filled them all with silent wonder. A thousand questions pounded against their brains.

"Here comes somebody," Arundell pointed out.

There were moving figures coming along the road. Then, before their startled eyes, there was a flash of light and a vehicle rolled along rapidly, passed them, and away again into the distance.

"What the blazes?"

"It was a chariot!"

"A Roman chariot! I saw the driver and the man with him plain as day. Regular Roman helmet and uniform. And four horses, sweaty and dusty. And the faces of those men were real. Nothing unearthly about them, either."

The men stared at each other in amazement. All sorts of weird thoughts crowded their minds. They shook their heads in dim bewilderment.

"Here come the rest of them!"

"It's an army. Romans, too."

"A regular legion. See the officers' uniforms, helmets, and breastplates. And the men in the ranks. They are no different from Caesar's men. No difference at all."

Along that road marched file after file of soldiers. Short metal kirtles waved with the motion of their legs; short swords swung at their sides; shining cuirasses and glistening metal helmets were topped with proudly waving plumes on those of the officers. And rows and rows of spears

were held defiantly upwards into the light. The space venturers could see the stern grim warrior features of the marchers' faces.

Yet, with all that, not a sound broke the silence. Not a single marcher took note of the space-ship or the curiously garbed figures standing so close by watching them.

"Look at the officer!" Seaward pointed.

An officer in the later ranks was looking over in their general direction. With a wave of his metal-sheathed arm and a motion of his mouth as if shouting a command, he turned for a moment to the soldiers. The lines of men halted and many glances were cast over in the direction of the *Astralite*.

Then, at another inaudible shout, the lines veered and rearranged themselves with the ease of veterans into battle formation. Spears were leveled and shields raised to form a protective wall. And then the entire line left the road and began to move slowly towards the *Astralite*.

The four grew slightly panicky. Although they could defend themselves easily with their highly advanced weapons, there was something so uncanny and ghostly about the line of Romans closing up to them and the ominous proximity of those sharp spear points.

Kendall swung up his explosion pistol and pulled the trigger. In the midst of the ranks, there was a terrific flare of light. Pieces of rock and metal splattered all about. But when the disturbance cleared away, the four gave a shout.

"God help us! What kind of things are these?" gasped Broster. "They're not even hurt!"

"But I saw that explosion in the middle of them with my own eyes!" choked Kendall.

"Say, wait a minute," Seaward exclaimed. "They aren't looking at us at all. They're looking at something behind us!"

Immediately they all whirled about. And their astonishment was complete. For emerging from the woods behind them were coming men—soldiers dressed in conical helmets and different cut equip-

ment—heavily bearded men such as formed the ranks of Carthage of ancient times. They were advancing upon the Romans. Then suddenly the Carthagian line broke and charged forward.

● The four space-flyers stood and stared in astonishment. They were caught between two ranks of advancing soldiery. Already long pointed arrows passed by them. Arundell cried out in amazement when he saw an arrow pass straight through Broster's arm and Broster never even murmured.

"Didn't you feel that arrow?" he shouted.

"What arrow?" answered Broster, apparently unaware of what the other had seen.

But before the answer could come, the battle broke. The two ranks of warriors met. They broke into a bloody conflict. Spears crashed against shield, swords swung against swords; the figures of struggling, screaming men were all about; bodies lay upon the grass. Blood spurted about. Masses of furiously battling men were all around.

And the *Astralite* crew could only stand there in blank wonder. For the spot where the lines had met was where they stood. And the lines had charged *through* them! The figures of Carthagian and Roman had passed through the very spots the space-men occupied and they felt nothing—and they heard nothing. They saw, time and time again, a sword or spear or hand pass through the body of one or another of their fellows or into their own bodies, yet they felt absolutely nothing.

"Come on; let's get out of here!" cried Kendall finally, suiting his actions to his words by wading through the ranks of combatants and back to the *Astralite*. The rest followed.

Once inside the ship, they divested themselves of their space-suits without a word. Then, by mutual consent, the *Astralite* was raised several yards above the ground and hovered there, while the men watched at the windows the silent battle going on below.

"I can't understand it. What manner of world is this?"

"It's haunted, that's what!" said another.

"Wait a minute before we say such things," spoke up Fred Broster. "There's got to be some logical explanation."

"But what? Is this world haunted by the ghosts of long-dead inhabitants?" Kendall queried half seriously.

"In the first place, whatever these men are, they are not the ghosts of anything on this world. They are real Romans and Carthagians from the earth. If you don't believe me, look at the standards. Note the SPQR on the Roman emblem over there," Seaward remarked.

The rest realized the startling truth of that.

"You know, we don't know where this light comes from yet. It just seems to emanate from the sky," stated the captain. For a while, no one spoke. But Broster had evidently touched off something in his own mind. He murmured softly.

"Real Romans, sun but light out of sky, no sounds; yet we see an earth scene of thousands of years ago; we can't feel the things in the scene—the edges of this world's disc from space are vague and unfocussed. Unfocussed. Why? Three thousand light years or more from Earth and now an earth scene. Hmm."

Then suddenly he gave a shout.

"I've got it. It's the ether warp!"

"What?" the others broke in. "What about the ether warp?"

"Listen; I'll explain," Broster proceeded. "You know that light takes time to travel, of course. And you also know that once light starts, it goes on forever carrying with it the impressions imposed upon it. Everything that has ever happened on earth is still visible somewhere in the universe where those particular waves of light happen to be. Of course they are too weak and scattered to be really visible, but they are there. Now you remember that we passed through a great stretch of space several hundred light years away from earth, wherein the ether

(Continued on page 493)

THE SPACE LENS

By Millard Verne Gordon

(Continued from page 457)

and all that passed along it was warped and bent, due no doubt to unknown fourth dimensional cosmic forces. Well, this region we know to be somewhat elliptical in shape. We also know it to be directly in a line between the Earth and this planet. What must have happened is this: the ether warp region acted as a gigantic space-lens. All the light and gravitational waves from the Earth were bent in passing through that lens; were in short, bent, exactly as light is bent passing through a glass lens—so that it finally came to a focus where the original image was reproduced. Now if there had been no actual body here to act as a screen, we would have been none the wiser. But due to the fact that a gravitational pull was reflected also, this smooth metal sphere was at-

tracted and held here at the point of focus. The result is that we have here a vision of the earth down to the last tiny detail. But that is all that it is—merely an image. And as light takes three thousand or so years to reach this particular point, why, the scene reproduced is that of the Roman era. We are undoubtedly witnessing a battle that was fought out thousands of years ago!"

The men listened with astonishment on their faces. Then they changed to startled looks of belief. A space-lens!—and the image of the earth. Their own home world!—so near and yet so far!

"Well, I'll be hanged! If this don't beat anything yet," murmured one, and the others could do nought but agree with him.

THE END