

Volume
1
Number
5

SCIENCE FICTION *Quarterly*

May,
1952

132 PAGES OF NEW STORIES — NO REPRINTS!

★ ★ *Feature Novel* ★ ★
THE SHINING CITY Rena M. Vale 10

Thor wonders if his loyalty to the city isn't a worse betrayal than his son's treason. But must there be war of extermination between the city and others?



Two Unusual Novelets

- WHEN IN DOUBT, MUTATE! E. Hoffmann Price 54
Oscar isn't born human; he's made human. And he doesn't like it!
- EXTRA-SECRET AGENT H. B. Fyfe 78
Laril doesn't know his mission, but there's another agent operating with him who is even more secret!

Short Stories

- THE LUCKIEST MAN ALIVE! William Morrison 96
—obviously, will be the one who's chosen "Mister Earth"!
- WE, THE PEOPLE... Ward Moore 101
Any resemblances in this fable shouldn't be too surprising.

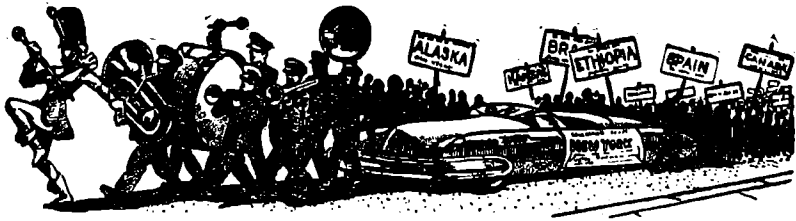
Departments And Features

- IT SAYS HERE (*Editorial comment and Letters*) 6
- SCIENCE IN SCIENCE FICTION No. 4 James Blish 49
Wherein we look into "The psychological story".
- READIN' AND WRITHIN' (*Book Review Dept.*) Robert W. Lowndes 77
- THE BLACK MAGIC OF YESTERDAY (*Article*) Eugene W. Nelson 106
- THE RECKONING and READERS' PREFERENCE COUPON 130

Cover by Milton Luros, suggested by "The Shining City"
Interior illustrations by Luros and Poulton

ROBERT W. LOWNDES, Editor

SCIENCE FICTION, QUARTERLY, May, 1952, published February, May, August, and November, by COLUMBIA PUBLICATIONS, Inc., 1 Appleton Street, Holyoke Mass. Editorial and executive offices at 161 Church Street, New York 14, New York. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at Holyoke, Mass., under the Act of March 3, 1979. Single copy 25c yearly subscription \$1.00. Entire contents copyright 1952 by COLUMBIA PUBLICATIONS, Inc. Manuscripts must be accompanied by self-addressed envelopes to insure return if not accepted, and while reasonable care will be exercised in handling them, it is understood that they are submitted at author's risk. Printed in U. S. A.



We, The People...

A Fable of Futurity by Ward Moore

MAINE voted in September. On the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November the rest of the 108 States went to the polls.

Of course the solemn ritual, the great memorial gesture for which the inhabitants of the planet Arcturus Three existed, began much earlier in the year—in May, to be precise, when the first primaries were held. Sound trucks shouted, "*Vote for delegates pledged to Jones!*" Opposing trucks replied as loudly, "*A vote for Jones is a vote for Robinson. Don't be misled!*"

There were, naturally, but two parties—except in the Solid South (which, by a peculiar freak of Arcturan geography, was located on an island-continent, quite isolated from the rest of the Republic) and Vermont—since none but Republicans or Democrats represented tradition. True, centuries earlier—when this new United States first established on Arcturus Three—it had been argued that Federalists, Whigs, even Greenbackers and Populists also represented tradition and ought to be allowed at least token incarnation. At this point, Jefferson Davis Huey Long Yokum, representing the sovereign State of South Carolina, had risen to declare, "Sir,

it is a fact the Democrats can lick the Republicans with one wing tied behind them. To split the opposition would not be sporting, and we of the South, Suh—"

Here the Honorable Mr. Yokum recounted briefly the history of the War Between the States, with particular attention to the disposition of Ewell's corps at Chancellorsville, touched on the sanctity of Womanhood, Chivalry, Problems Peculiar to Certain Regions, Coca-Cola, States' Rights and the Boll Weevil. Some four hours later he dived for his original sentence and caught it in mid-flight.

"—we of the South, Suh, have always been advocates of fair play. There is no room in politics for any but We-All and Those People." Jeff Yokum carried his point by acclamation.

In June, the great Convention Hall was made ready for the Democrats. Festooned with red, white and blue bunting tastefully interspersed with donkey heads, the auditorium was a magnificent sight when the temporary chairman called the convention to order. As one, the delegates rose and stood in awed silence as the band—operated entirely by remote control, even to the bursts of perspiration on

the conductor's forehead—rendered a selection of patriotic airs, including *Dixie*, *Kuppenhammer's Margarine's CREAMY Keen*, and *The Nutcracker Suite*.

After the invocation, the chairman of the Abyssinian delegation asked to be recognized. This brought concerted cries of "No, no—never!" and "Outrage!" from the Mississippians and Alabamans. The Chair inquired if the Honorable Delegate from—ah—Abyssinia was aware that the floor was customarily granted only to representatives of the ancient Forty-Eight States? He wished to cast no aspersions on the State of Abyssinia—whose star had an honored place in Old Glory and whose sons were as loyal Americans as any beneath the sun of Arcturus ("Hear, Hear!" from the West Indian Delegates)—but if he remembered his history Abyssinia had been admitted to the Union as the ninety-seventh or ninety-eighth State.

Since that great commonwealth had been sending delegations to conventions for the past two hundred years, always asking for the floor without ever getting it, he was almost constrained to believe—well, much as he hesitated to say it—there was something faulty in the Abyssinian makeup, or, to use a very ancient phrase, a screw loose. (Laughter from those members of the convention who could appreciate the wit of so applying the archaic term.) He was therefore compelled to rule that the Abyssinian delegation be thrown out by the Sergeant-at-Arms. (Cries of "Steamroller!" "Czar!" from parts of the hall, and the Rebel Yell from others.)

The Abyssinians disposed of, a Permanent Chairman was elected and Platform One adopted. Platform One, drafted centuries before, was always adopted by the party in power. It was sprinkled with the sacred phrase. "*We point with pride*" and denounced the opposition party as a disruptive force, with no constructive program, and called on the electorate to return again

the party of Jefferson, Wilson and FDR.

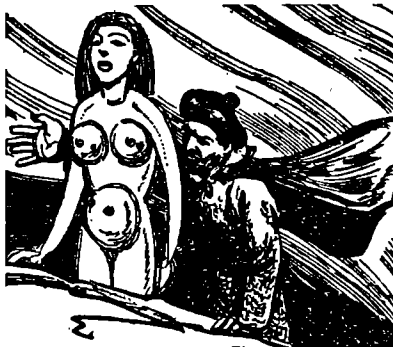
A delegate from Oklahoma (having been yielded to buy the Alabama contingent) rose and began, "Thousands of years ago that sub-celestial paradise the best of all possible worlds, was blown apart. Fortunately colonies had already been established on Mars; these colonies piously labored to rebuild the great American civilization exactly as they had known it. When Mars exploded into fragments during World War VI, civilization moved to Jupiter; after that planet met its inevitable fate, Americans left the Solar System and spread all over the Galaxy. Thanks to their great wisdom and superhuman foresight we are here today, carrying on exactly as primeval Americans carried on in the pre-fission past."

THE DELEGATE went on to review the history of the establishment of the United States of Arcturus Three and laud the intelligence of those who had conceived this protected memorial as second only to that of the Founding Fathers themselves. The United States of Arcturus Three counted itself rich in many distinguished citizens, but he ventured to say, that the one whom he was about to name was no inferior in patriotism, statesmanship or firmness. He was one who had devoted himself to the perpetuation of American ideals and the policies of the Democratic Party. His enemies called him stiff and unimaginative; let them. This only proved that the one whom he was about to name, the one who was, in his opinion, most fitted to symbolize the Democratic Party—and so on, one who by one whom, for an hour and twenty-six minutes and fourteen seconds, until, in a final burst nominating James Quincy Halibut, "the next President of the United States of Arcturus Three."

At the name of Halibut, the delegates went wild with frenzy and relieved tension. Seizing the standard of the Oklahoma delegation, they pa-

rated up and down the aisles. After some struggle with dissidents who preferred candidates as yet unnamed, the standards of Arizona, Montana, Costa Rica, Pakistan and Mongolia followed. Whistles blew; rattles whirled; the band broke into *Happy Days Are Here Again*, and thirty-four alternates emptied revolvers at the crystal chandeliers while the galleries chanted, "We want Halibut!"

The demonstration lasted exactly fifty-four minutes and fifty-nine seconds, at which time it halted abruptly, in order not to equal the enthusiasm shown for the name of Horace W. Milldap, who had received an ovation of fifty-five minutes a hundred and sixteen years before.



After this, the chairman of the Arkansas delegation, in a fiery speech, recalled the glories of the past—the National Debt for 1958 (Old Style); galactic navigation by sonar propulsion; the structure of charonium 23—and moved by gradual steps to the name of Grover Woodrow Fogbottom, "the next Chief Magistrate of Arcturus Three."

The standards of New York, Nevada, Wisconsin, Jugoslavia, Indonesia and El Salvador followed that of Arkansas around the convention floor. The galleries shouted, "We want Fog. Good old Foggy!" The demonstration lasted exactly fifty-four minutes and fifty-nine seconds.

An Ohioan nominated Ambrose Numscragger; a Pennsylvanian, Eustace F. Mahaffey; a delegate from

Wyoming, Clarence I Sinbad. Attempts of delegates from Siam, Ceylon and South Africa to put forward favorite sons were declared out of order, undemocratic, obscene, subversive and indelicate. Nominations were declared closed and the chairman began calling the roll.

"Alabama."

The spokesman of the Alabama delegation arose majestically and announced, "Alabama casts twenty-four votes for Oscar W. Underwood."

"Alaska."

"Alaska, the Greatest State of All—the only State that ever put Texas in its place—Alaska casts her six votes for G. W. Fogbottom."

All over Arcturus Three, the deliberations of the convention were transmitted by telepresence: three dimensional, audible, visible, touchable and smellable. To any less decorous than the Tertiary Arcturans, this remarkable gadget might have offered tempting possibilities of rowdyism, or mayhem, but their patriotic devotion was such that—even at the height of partisan zeal—no bricks were ever hurled into the auditorium through the telepresence, no speakers ever suffered the indignity of being shut off with a muffling drape. (This might be to some extent accounted for by the blow steamer which came as standard equipment on all telepresences: a button, which when pressed gave a hoot of such volume that almost anyone's feeling would be relieved.) When, on the seventeenth ballot, Grover W. Fogbottom was declared the nominee, the simultaneous blast of the millions of blow steamers could have been heard on the planet's nearest moon—had there been anyone there to listen—and actually did register on sensitive instruments several light years away.

A more properly sedate enthusiasm reigned in the hall itself, and the protests of India, China and France that their votes had not been counted was passed over in dignified silence as the Oklahoma delegation moved to make the nomination of Fogbottom unani-

mous. This was carried by acclamation, whereupon Arkansas nominated James Quincy Halibut for Vice-President. After some half-hearted opposition from supporters of Clarence Sinbad, he was named, and the Democratic ticket stood: Fogbottom and H-libut.

AS SOON as the Democrats made their decision the auditorium was redecorated for the Republicans by replacing the donkey heads with elephant hams. The temporary chairman called the convention to order and the delegates rose respectfully to hear the band play *Home Sweet Home*, *Always Smoke Luckifields FOB*, and Boccherini's *Celebrated Minuet*. A delegate from Greenland asked for the floor and was tossed out, the temporary chairman was made permanent, and the convention adopted Platform Two which viewed with alarm the character of the party in power and urged the electorate to support the party of Lincoln, Arthur and Hoover. On the first ballot they named Robert T. Elmersnort for President and Eugene P. Butterwaife as his running-mate.

The battle was now joined, and the citizens of Arcturus Three—from the shores of the polar sea which teemed with blue turkfish, spotted seals, rhinowhales, sea-tapirs and marine giraffes, to the frozen wastes of New Antartica—threw themselves with frantic enthusiasm into the struggle. Republican orators catalogued the talents of Elmersnort and Butterwaife; Democrats lauded the incomparable Fogbottom and Halibut. The Gallup Poll predicted the election of Fogbottom under certain circumstances; the Roper Poll showed that Elmersnort—presuming that specific conditions prevailed—would have 50.01 percent of the votes.

The campaign grew hotter and hotter. Elmersnort denounced Fogbottom as a scalawag with universalistic leanings; Fogbottom answered that Elmersnort was ideologically sympathetic

with certain galactic adventurers. James Quincy Halibut declared the Republicans thought they were still in the Solar System; Eugene Butterwaife retorted that if the Solar System was good enough for George Washington it was good enough for him.

Maine voted in September; the telepresences gave out not only the vote count as it came in, but percentages, breakdowns and comparisons with previous totals. It was a Republican victory of course, and G. O. P. adherents proclaimed, "*As Maine goes, so goes the Union*," while Democrats noted the Republicans had got only 61.09 percent of the votes, whereas four years earlier it had been 61.11. All over the planet, billboards blaring the celebrated Elmersnort and Butterwaife faced equally-imposing billboards blaring the virtues of Fogbottom and Halibut.

At last the great day dawned. There were dust-storms near the equator of Arcturus Three, a rain of six-legged frogs over most of the northern hemisphere, and a volcanic eruption which poured out molten cinnabar in New Australia. "Republican weather," said the Democrats disgustedly.

BY NINE o'clock the returns from Quinick, Georgia, showed Fogbottom 9, Elmersnort, 0; at noon all the residents of Skunk Falls, New Hampshire had registered their choice: Elmersnort 16, Fogbottom 1—which gave the Democrats great heart, for at the last election they had gleaned no support in Skunk Falls.

By early evening it was clear that Elmersnort was carrying Vermont, Maine, Delaware, England, Sweden and Japan, while Fogbottom was ahead in Florida, Louisiana, Virginia, Poland, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan. Nip and tuck.

At ten o'clock Ohio was safely in the Democratic column, Pennsylvania went Republican, but Michigan, Ontario and Brazil were overwhelmingly for Fogbottom. Newer Zealand was

three to two for Elmersnort, but Fogbottom had an edge in Missouri, Iowa, Kansas, Illinois, Holland and Turkey.

As usual, everything hung on California and everyone on Arcturus Three waited anxiously for the voice of the Golden State. At last it came in unmistakable terms: Fogbottom, 2,605; Elmersnort, 2,604; Fogbottom, 26,050; Elmersnort, 26,049; Fogbottom, 2,605,000; Elmersnort, 2,604,999. There was no doubt about it—a trend had been established and the Democrats were in again.

In the gloomy headquarters at the Nonunion League Club, obstinate politicians refused to give in; eighty-eight years before the Republicans had scored a stunning upset when all had seemed lost. Their jubilant rivals talked of a Fogbottom landslide. At last even the most optimistic Republicans had to bow to facts and figures: Hawaii and Denmark both rolled up majorities for Fogbottom and Halibut.

It was after midnight when the defeated candidate, Robert T. Elmersnort, appeared on the telepresence to concede his downfall in a sportsman-like speech. In a few moments, he said, his victorious rival, to whom he offered not only congratulations, but every sincere wish for success, would

have the momentous honor, the highest distinction to which any on Arcturus Three could aspire. As for himself, he accepted the verdict of the voters cheerfully and he urged all his supporters to do the same.

The shining face of President-elect Grover W. Fogbottom was greeted by a concerted roar from the blow steamers. In a silvery voice he spoke of being deeply moved by the generous speech of his late opponent. At times like these all on Arcturus Three must never rust or break down, but must tune themselves to utmost efficiency. It had been a hard fight but a clean one, worthy of the Great Tradition for which they existed. *"And now,"* he concluded, as his finely jointed hand moved to a nearby switch, *"it is my duty and privilege to perform that solemn act which is the duty and privilege of every President-elect."*

Whereupon the victorious candidate pulled the switch and turned off the power on Arcturus Three. All over the planet the robots, self-repairing, practically everlasting masterpieces of ingenuity and skill, stiffened into inertness. They would not move for nearly four years, until it became time for the Great Tradition to be celebrated again.

