

THE ORIGIN OF

**CAPTAIN
FUTURE**

CAPTAIN FUTURE

Wizard of Science and Man of Tomorrow

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http://www.pulpgen.com/pulp/captain_future/index.html
and the
"Captain Future Handbook", compiled by Chuck Juzek

I. INTRODUCTION BY ROBERT WEINBERG

In early 1970, I received a letter from Swedish fan, Carl-Olaf Jonsson, suggesting a possible article for PULP. Carl had been a long time fan of the Captain Future series and had corresponded with Edmond Hamilton for some time. Jonsson had already formed a Captain Future fanclub in Sweden and had written an article for Swedish fandom on the Wizard of Science.

I was hesitant about publishing such an article as there have been a number of very good articles done on the character. However, both myself and Steve Riley were great fans of Edmond Hamilton, so I decided to take a look at the proposed feature. What I received, astonished me.

After careful consideration, I decided that an article commenting on the following material would be unnecessary and anticlimactic. All of the information in this article is either by Edmond Hamilton or the editors of Captain Future Magazine. Several letters from the author to Carl-Olaf Jonsson are used to tie the material together, as well as add several interesting facts about the series never before revealed.

There is no need to emphasize that none of this material has ever appeared before in the United States. Our deep thanks go to Carl-Olaf Jonsson for making possible this article. Even more so, we have to thank Edmond Hamilton, the creator of Captain Future, for this unusual Inside Look at Captain Future.

II. THE ORIGINAL "ORDER" FROM THE PUBLISHER FOR "CAPTAIN FUTURE"

"... You speak of the original 'order' from the publisher for CF. Yes, I still have this ... dated June 1939. You wouldn't believe what they wanted. I had to go up to New York and argue with them for days until they let me change their proposed set-up ..."

Edmond Hamilton

MR. FUTURE ... WIZARD OF SCIENCE

1990 ... An internationally famous American scientist and explorer, Roger Carter Newton, is experimenting on a newly discovered element (found in a meteor) with super X-rays and high-powered cosmic waves. Roger Newton is searching for the secret of atomic power a secret which he wishes to solve for humanity's sake.

Working with Newton is his wife, Elaine, a skillful researcher in X-rays and radium phenomena. Suddenly Roger Newton lifts his head, pivots around. At the opposite corner of the room, he sees a man – a European spy ransacking his files, grabbing his notes and formulas. The spy, detected, fires a shot at Newton. He misses but the bullet shatters the super-Coolidge tube, resulting in a volcanic explosion. Roger Newton and the spy are killed in this explosion. But his wife survives, though the mysterious radioactive emanations ensuing from the explosion have enveloped her destroying her sight.

Shortly afterward, Elaine Newton gives birth to a son, Curtis Newton. Curt Newton is a normal, healthy child. But his eyes can see a little better than those of others. His hearing is more sensitive than that of his playmates. His reflexes are just a trifle quicker than those of others. Curtis Newton is Mr. Future! (The mysterious X-rays and cosmic rays have affected the genes and chromosomes of his body, making him a biological mutant, the first superman.)

Curtis Newton's specially adapted characteristics enable him to become the foremost scientist in the world. His brain is remarkably facile, and after several years of intense study, globe-girdling, etc. Curtis Newton is equipped for the role of Mr. Future, wizard of science.

Mr. Future! The wizard of science whose exploits are to become legendary throughout the universe. For Mr. Future's life is dedicated to the administering of justice, helping the oppressed. Driven by the same relentless spirit that spurred his father into scientific researches that might benefit humanity, Mr. Future is feared throughout the Solar System as a force for justice, unknown, unseen, unpredictable. The law officials

of all the inhabited worlds cooperate with him, respect him deeply.

But Mr. Future is no cold-blooded scientist. Towering six-feet four, with magnetic brown eyes that can twinkle with winsome humor as well as cold purposefulness, Mr. Future is tall, dark and handsome. His unruly shock of curly black hair does not detract from his debonair appearance, and in action Mr. Future looks as if he had stepped out of the pages of a Dumas book. He is likable, has a good sense of humor, and is surrounded with the same aura of glamour and personality that is identified with fiction's favorite he-men, Cyrano, D'Artagnan, Scaramouche. He is not super-perfect ... has some minor faults. He is enthusiastic in his undertakings. (As a touch in human interest build-up, Mr. Future may have some eccentric scientific hobby, which may be used as a running gag in all novels.)

In physical action, Mr. Future is lightning-quick with his fist and reflexes, and can hurl his powerful, lithe frame with the force of a catapult. And he can take it.

Curtis Newton builds himself a secret laboratory at the North Pole. There he perfects a super space-ship, the only one on Earth equipped to travel without rocket-tubes as a means of propulsion. Curtis Newton's space ship utilizes the warping of gravitation for its motive power. It is fleeter, more compact than any other ship in the Solar System. He can travel at the speed of light – 186,000 miles per second.

Mr. Future flies to the moon, establishes a secret laboratory, near the crater Tycho. Still a third secret laboratory is established on a small, uncharted asteroid that circles the most distant planet in the Solar System, Pluto.

Should Earth government desire the help of Mr. Future, giant magnesium flares are set off in the vast expanses of the Gobi Desert. Mr. Future can see those dazzling flares by means of his powerful, super-telescope.

In his many years of research at his North Pole base, Mr. Future has solved many scientific secrets. He has mastered the art of telepathy and can read the minds of most men unless they make an effort to close their

minds to his.

Mr. Future has perfected the ability to make himself invisible. However, he can only make himself invisible for about fifteen minutes, due to the fact that a longer exposure to the rays needed to render him invisible will prove harmful. Another interesting complication resulting from the use of his invisibility device is that he cannot see what is happening around him while he is invisible. His device bends the light rays around him. No light strikes his eyes. Therefore, he has only his super-acute senses of instinct, hearing and touch to guide him when under the invisible rays. (These complications are suggested to offer exciting action when Mr. Future uses the invisibility device, and the time limit slowly approaches and with it the danger of his exposure to the enemy.

Mr. Future's scientific equipment, always carried on his person, consists of a simple, tensile, tungsten-like belt. The belt supports a miniature kit. This kit lodges make-up materials, the invisibility device, a special chronometer which is equipped to tell him the various times on different worlds, also Earth time. Mr. Future also carries a small, powerful proton gun which can be used to paralyze victims or kill them, depending on the intensity of the beam. Still another device in the kit is a miniature radio set, used to receive and send radio waves to any part of the universe. This device operates through the sub-ether.

But, by far, the most commanding item carried by Mr. Future is a strange ruby-like ring, shaped like a rosetta. This ring is Mr. Future's means of identification, and should anyone care to inspect it they would notice that the glittering surface of the ruby constantly flashed and faded in an iridescent combination of dazzling colors. The ruby's colors seem to swirl, coalesce, change form. It is like a strange life-form, with all the majesty and brilliance of the Aurora Borealis. (more about the ring later.)

Mr. Future's fleet space ship is the most powerfully equipped craft in the Universe. It contains a magnificent laboratory. Every element known to science reposes in the chemistry section. In another section are housed test tubes containing samples of the atmosphere from every planet, satellite and charter asteroid in the Solar System, and even those uncharted. The astronomy section contains spectrum-analysis of all the first, second, third, fourth and fifth- magnitude stars, as well as those of the planets and satellites.

In the botanical division of his space ship are specimen plants from all the different worlds. One plant from Mars, Mr. Future uses to manufacture a strange drug which has the power to make its victim tell the truth. Another plant from the deserts of Venus can make its victims shrink.

Mr. Future's spaceship houses super- microscopes, electron-telescopes, etc. The device in the ship has the

power to read the brains of men that have died ... but only if applied before rigor mortis sets in.

Yet the greatest characteristic of Mr. Future's super space ship is in its rare quality of camouflage. For, through the dispersion of luminous, incandescent gaseous particles, Mr. Future can create an artificial streamer of luminous light that envelops his ship and causes it to look like a comet! Thus, should Mr. Future be pursued, he can turn his ship into a synthetic comet, with a blinding tail that will make pursuit impossible and unlikely.

Still another device in Mr. Future's space ship enables him to pick up light waves that have sped off into eternity. With this device, Mr. Future can actually find out what has occurred in the past. A murder takes place in Times Square. Mr. Future focuses his machine at the scene. The light rays that have sped away from the scene, into space, are collected back again, and Mr. Future recreates the scene, as if it were a motion picture. (this is quite possible, Camille Flammarion, the French astronomer, used it for the basis of his novel, "Uranis".)

Though Mr. Future can speak twenty-five Terrestrial languages, he is not thoroughly familiar with all the 150 different languages spoken throughout the Solar System. So, his ship contains philological sound records of all the various tongues, with key vocabularies, etc.

The ship has numerous safety devices, retractable wings for landing, etc. It can be used as a submarine in water. On land surfaces, it can be converted into a fortress-like tractor. Many scientific weapons, long-range guns, etc. in the ship. Also, a device which can be used to erase the memory of any organic being, through electrical impacts on the tissues of the brain.

Mr. Future has three associates. But they are the strangest associates ever known to any one man:

1. A thinking robot.
This robot, instead of being composed of metal cogs and wheels, looks superficially like a human being like Mr. Future himself! Mr. Future has fashioned this robot as his double, so that he can use it as a decoy when necessary, or as a subject for make-up tests, strange experiments, etc. Mr. Future can control this robot by his telepathic powers.
2. Simon Wright, the walking encyclopedia.
Simon Wright has read every scientific test, catalogue, and journal in the world. He is a living library, inasmuch as he has a photographic mind. Mr. Future has but to ask a scientific question and back comes an answer from Wright. Wright can never be wrong. But there's one thing about Wright. He has no initiative, can't coordinate facts into helpful suggestions. He gives the answers but Mr. Future has to dope out how to ap-

ply their significance himself. Mr. Future has tried innumerable times to operate on Simon Wright, in an effort to develop his ingenuity, etc., but to no avail.

3. Otho, the warrior from Ganymede.

Mentioned previously was Mr. Future's strange ring, whose red, glittering, multi-colored rainbow-hued surface actually seems to be living, if closely inspected. Well, this ring does live. For this ruby-like setting is a native of Ganymede. Evolution here has produced a strange, crystal-like form of life. In one of his exploits, Mr. Future discovered this race of crystal-like beings. There is no atmosphere on Ganymede, and crystal life is the only one possible.

Otho the coalescing crystal in Mr. Future's ring, saved Mr. Future from annihilation by others of the crystal race. These crystal beings exerted a weird hypnotic ray, and tried to force Mr. Future to take off his space helmet, which would cause his asphyxiation. Otho interfered, however, established communication with Mr. Future via telepathy, and Mr. Future, grateful, acceded to Otho's wish to have him accompany the scientist on all his exploits.

No one guesses that the "ruby" in Mr. Future's ring is an actual, living entity. Otho helps Mr. Future out of many problems, and he can give the helpful answers to a lot of the formulas and facts that Simon Wright turns

out.

In a tight spot, Mr. Future can use Otho to hypnotize an enemy. Or Otho can leave the ring, carry himself by secret forces for miles in the vicinity, remaining constantly in telepathic communication with Mr. Future.

Joan Randall, stratocar speedster, adventuress; she is beautiful, young, and in love with Mr. Future. She does not have to play a dominant role in all novels, but she should be worked in plausibly. Mr. Future cannot marry her until there is universal peace, his mission in life fulfilled.

And there we have Mr. Future, wizard of science!

Note:

In connection with novels based on the character, Mr. Future, the history of Earth and the Solar System will have to be pretty much standardized. Author must decide whether Mars is to be inhabited or not, once and for all. The descriptions of the Venusians must be consistent in all novels. The President of Earth must be the same character in all stories, and similarly with other planetary officials with whom Mr. Future is friendly.

To allow for elasticity of plot and non-restriction of complications, author can make use of unexplored territories on the lost continent of Venus, submarine life and domains on Neptune, uncharted asteroids, subterranean civilizations on Mars, etc..

III.

THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT OF THE FIRST TWO CHAPTERS OF THE FIRST "CAPTAIN FUTURE" NOVEL

"... In going through my files I've found the original manuscript of the first two chapters of the first Captain Future novel.

The editors didn't like this opening, so I rewrote the first 2 chapters of the first story, in the form in which they appeared in "Captain Future and the Space Emperor". So this original opening, which was never published, constitutes the first pages of Captain Future ever written ..."

Edmond Hamilton

CHAPTER 1 – THE REFUGEES

The name and fame of Captain Future are known to every living man and woman. The incredible exploits of that most amazing adventurer in history will be told and retold as long as men live.

But few people, even now, know the tale of how Captain Future came to be, of the utterly strange beginning of that tremendous career. Few people guess that the cherished dream of a young biologist marked the beginning of it all.

Roger Newton dreamed of creating life. The young



CAPTAIN FUTURE

biologist believed that he could succeed in creating artificial, intelligent, manlike creatures who would be able to think and work to serve humanity. It was a great dream, surely, though it was to have consequences utterly beyond his wildest imaginings.

For Newton decided to remove his work to a safer place. He and his scientific discoveries were in danger. A certain unscrupulous politician who had sinister ambitions had heard of the young biologist's potent discoveries, and had first tried to buy them, and then to steal them. There was danger – danger to humanity if those secrets got into such hands. Hence came Roger Newton's decision to seek a safe refuge in which he could work secretly.

On a night in that June of 1990, the young biologist communicated his decision to his only intimates, his young wife, Elaine, and his loyal co-worker, Simon Wright.

Restlessly pacing the big, crowded laboratory of their secluded Long Island farm, his red hair disordered and his lean, sensitive young face and blue eyes wor-

ried, he told them.

"Victor Kaslan's agents will find us here, sooner or later," he asserted. "And think of my discoveries, my plasm cultures and new bacteriophages, in Kaslan's hands! He would use them to scourge humanity into accepting him as a dictator. That mustn't happen we must go to a place where we'll be entirely safe."

"But where can we go, Roger?" appealed Elaine Newton anxiously.

She was a little thing, this girl whom destiny had cast for a part in an historic drama. But there was courage in the poise of her small, dark head, and in her big, earnest gray eyes. She had pride in her boyish husband, pride and deep love.

"Yes, where can we go?" echoed Simon Wright in his metallic, unhuman voice. "Are you thinking of taking refuge on one of the colonized planets?"

"No, we couldn't hide on any of the planets," Newton replied earnestly. "There are Earth colonies on all of them now, remember, and rockets coming and going in increasing numbers. Kaslan's agents would be sure to find us."

"Then where is this refuge you speak of, if it's not on earth or any of the planets?" Simon Wright demanded.

And Wright's lens-like photoelectric eyes bored questioningly into young Newton's face.

Simon Wright was not a man. He had once been a man – he had once been an aging scientist who had achieved fame in a half dozen different fields of science. But he had been a dying man – a man slowly dying from an incurable disease that made every moment of his life a torment.

The tortured, dying scientist had come to Roger Newton for release. He had proposed an amazing plan – that Newton take his brain out of his diseased, dying body, and preserve it as a living brain in a special serum-case.

"It can be done!" Wright had argued desperately. "The Lindbergh perfusion pump of fifty years ago has been so improved and blood serums so perfected, that my brain can live indefinitely in a serum-case. You can

give me sight, speech and hearing by attaching my nerve centers electrically to artificial eyes and mouth and ears."

"But would you want to live on like that, Doctor Wright?" Newton had asked, half-horrified. "An isolated brain, your body gone –"

"My body is a torment to me." the old scientist had declared. "And soon its failing organs will give way altogether, and it and my brain will die, and all the immense knowledge I have stored up for seventy years will be lost to humanity forever."

"That must not happen, Roger Newton. I say without boasting that no man in all history has held more scientific knowledge in his brain than I. If you do this for me, all that knowledge will be at your disposal – I will be your assistant in your great attempt to create intelligent life. And to work, to think and learn and discover new truths, is all that I want from life."

Moved by the agony of the old man and the earnestness of his plea, Newton had performed the difficult operation. He had transferred Simon Wright's living brain into a serum-case.

The case stood now on a table beside Newton and his wife. It was a gleaming chromium box a foot square, insulated against shock, heat and cold, and containing a tiny battery that could operate its compact perfusion pump and serum-repurifier for a year.

Set in its sides were the microphones that were Simon Wright's ears. In the front was the resonator by which he spoke, and above that were the two photoelectric lenses of his eyes, mounted on little flexible metal stalks that he could turn in any direction to shift his gaze.

"Where can we find refuge from Kaslan's spies, if not on earth or one of the planets?" he repeated metallically.

"Yes, Roger – where?" asked Elaine Newton tensely.

Newton went to the window and drew aside the curtain. Outside lay the peaceful, nighted Long Island fields, washed with silver by the effulgent rays of the full



THE BRAIN

moon that was rising in glorious majesty.

The white disk of the great satellite, mottled by its dark mountain-ranges and plains, shone starkly clear in the heavens. Roger Newton pointed up at it, as the girl and the brain watched wonderingly.

"There is our refuge," he said. "Up there, on the moon."

"On the moon?" cried Elaine Newton, her hand going to her throat. "Oh, no, Roger – it's impossible."

"Why impossible?" he countered. "A good interplanetary rocket can make the trip in less than forty eight hours. And we have enough money from my father's estate to buy such a rocket."

"But the moon! Elaine exclaimed, deep repulsion shadowing her eyes. "That savage, barren, airless globe that no one ever visits! How could anyone live there?"

"We can live there quite easily, dear," her young husband replied earnestly. "We shall take with us tools and equipment capable of excavating an underground home, with a glassite ceiling open to the sun and stars. Atomic energy will enable us to heat or cool it as we need, and to transmute rock into hydrogen and oxygen and nitrogen for air and water. And we can take sufficient concentrated food with us to last us indefinitely."

"I believe your plan is good, Roger," said Simon Wright's metallic voice slowly. The brain added, "Kaslan is not likely to think of looking for us on the moon. We can work there in peace, and I feel sure we'll succeed there in creating a living being. Then we can return, and give humanity a new race of servants."

Elaine smiled tremulously, but bravely. "Very well, Roger," she told her husband. "We'll go there, and maybe we'll be as happy on the moon as we have been here on earth."

"We?" echoed the young biologist astoundedly. "But you can't go, Elaine. When I said 'we' I meant Simon and myself. You must stay on earth, of course – you couldn't possibly live on that wild, lonely world."

"Do you think I would let you go there without me?" she cried. "No, if you go, I'm going with you."

"But our child –," he objected distressedly. She cut him short.

"Our child can be born on the moon as well as on earth," she said firmly.

Roger Newton hesitated, torn with anxiety. She saw his doubt, and added a strong argument.

"I couldn't stay here anyway, Roger. Don't you see – Victor Kaslan would find me and kidnap me, and force you to give up all your scientific discoveries to him as a ransom."

"That is true, Roger," interjected the brain's cold, incisive voice. "We must take Elaine with us."

"If we must, we must," Newton said finally, but his face was deeply troubled as he looked up at the shining disk of the satellite. "It's a terrible place to take anyone you love – a terrible place for our baby to be born –"

"I think I'm going to like it there," Elaine declared with forced gayety. "See how beautiful it looks tonight."

Simon Wright's photoelectric eyes moved on their stalks to stare up also at the shining moon-disk. Man,

woman and living brain gazed up in silence at their strange, distant future home.

Roger Newton was busy in the days that followed. It was necessary to preserve complete secrecy if Kaslan's agents were not to discover their whereabouts and plans. So he bought his rocket through a dummy company, and had it delivered to the lonely old farm by night.

The rocket was one designed for the growing Earth-Mars trade.

It was over a hundred feet long, powered by heavy cyclotrons that converted solid matter into atomic energy which was ejected from rocket-tubes in bow, stern and keel. It had a simplified one-man control, and a large hold amidships to contain supplies to be transported to the Earth's new mining towns on desert Mars.

Into that big hold., Roger Newton crammed equipment and supplies for an indefinite residence on the moon. Simon Wright, from his unparalleled scientific knowledge, dictated the long lists of necessities. Rapidly, as the weeks went by, the secret work of stocking the rocket neared completion. It towered in its launching-pit amid tall, concealing trees, looking a gigantic thing.

Early in September, when their preparations were almost complete, they received an alarm. Elaine reported fearfully that she had glimpsed a stealthy figure slipping away through the shrubbery at dawn. Newton felt instant apprehension that Kaslan's agents had finally found them.

"We'll start tonight!" he declared. "I can get the last cases of supplies aboard today."

"It would be wise," rasped Simon Wright in his toneless metallic voice.

That night when they emerged from the old house, a chill north wind was whistling through the trees. The moon was high in the sky, gibbous and casting a silver flood over the landscape.

Roger Newton carried the chromium serum-case that housed the living brain. He saw that his young wife's face was pale in the silver light as they approached the looming rocket.

"Listen!" exclaimed the brain's voice suddenly. "I hear someone coming –"

Then Newton heard the sound which the super-sensitive microphones of the brain had already detected – a deep, droning humming. A white spark was approaching across the starry sky.

"A flier!" he cried. "If it's Kaslan and his men –"

"Of course it's Kaslan," rasped Simon Wright. "The prowler Elaine saw this morning was one of his spies."

"Quick – we can still get away." Newton cried.

He and the pale girl climbed hastily up into the rocket with the brain. Once inside, he slammed and sealed the door, then hastened up with Elaine through the crowded hold to the pilot-cubby.

The humming flier was swooping to a landing a hundred yards away. As Newton hastily buckled Elaine into her recoil harness, he glimpsed men running from the flier toward their rocket, leveling long pistols that gleamed in the moonlight. Foremost among them ran the tall, hawk-faced figure of Victor Kaslan himself.

Newton thrust the brain-case into Elaine's hands to hold, and then leaped into his own recoil harness and slammed down switches. The cyclotrons in the stern started with a mounting roar of released atomic energy that drowned the shots outside.

Newton cut in the stern tubes. The great rocket seemed flung upward by a titanic explosion. The moonlit trees, the old house, Kaslan and his shouting men, vanished from about them. They screamed upward through the atmosphere at a rapidly mounting speed. Newton's head swam, as he felt himself crushed deep into his harness.

Finally as the scream of air outside died away, he was able to call hoarsely. "Elaine, are you all right?"

"Yes, Roger," she gasped, her white face twisted with pain. "And we got away safely –"

"We got away," muttered Simon Wright's metallic voice, "but Kaslan knows we've gone to some other world. He'll follow."

"He won't know where to follow," Newton declared confidently.

The rocket was now roaring on up through black, empty space. The moon shone bright and hard and cold before them, its stupendous mountain ranges standing out sharp and clear. It looked infinitely cruel and forbidding and hostile to life.

Elaine shivered. "I can't help feeling that we have left earth forever," she said. "That out on that wild, barren world, something strange and unheard-of is going to happen to us."

"Nothing can happen to us there," her husband told her reassuringly. "It will be a safe place for us – safe from all those like Victor Kaslan who would use our work for evil ends."

Newton was wrong, but he could not know that. He could not know that they three, man and woman and living brain, were rushing out toward an incredible concatenation of events which would mark the beginning of that amazing career that was to rock the whole solar system with mystery and wonder.

CHAPTER 2 – DEATH ON THE MOON

Upon the sun-scorched, rocky surface of the moon, a vast desert of white stone that lay beneath the glaring sun in eternal stillness and silence, the gigantic crater of Tycho towered in awesome majesty. Fully seventeen thousand feet above the inner floor loomed the colossal circular rampart of peaks and ridges that enclosed a plain more than fifty miles across.

Bold and blazing in the sunlight, thrust up against the blackness of starred space, the gigantic peaks had remained unchanged for unthinkable ages on this windless, soundless, airless world. But now a new feature had appeared – a gleaming sheet of glassite set in the rock floor, almost at the center of the crater. Beneath that big glassite window lay the underground home and laboratory of Roger Newton and his companions.

Newton and his wife and Simon Wright had been now ten months upon the moon. With atomic power, they had blasted a cavern in Tycho crater for their home. In it they had lived and worked, the rocket in which they had come being carefully concealed beneath a camouflage of rocks nearby.

The main room of the underground dwelling was the big laboratory that lay directly under the glassite window. Here, bathed in sunlight whose fierce glare had been softened by a translucent under-window, Newton and the brain had worked steadily at their great attempt to create intelligent life. And now the excited young biologist felt that the work was about to be crowned by final success.



GRAG

"Almost time, Simon," he said tautly, glancing swiftly from the oblong covered metal chamber before him, to a clock. "We figured twenty minutes extra for the final setting of the synthetic flash."

"Aye," rasped Simon Wright. "But we've had disappointments before, remember. This may be another."

"Somehow, I don't think so," Roger Newton declared, his blue eyes brilliant with excitement and hope. "I believe that this synthetic man will live."

The living brain made no answer, watching with lens eyes impassively from the table on which his serum-case rested.

Newton turned and raised his voice in a sharp call.

"Grag, come here! We'll need you in a moment: to lift this cover."

"I come, master," answered a deep, booming voice.

There was a clash of metal joints, a heavy tread from one of the nearby rooms. Into the big laboratory stalked a huge shape a metal robot.

It towered over seven feet in height, a massive, man-like figure. From the barrel-like metal torso extended tubular legs that ended in splayed feet whose soles were

padded with artificial rubber. Its mighty arms ended in hands that each possessed seven fingers which were detachable and could be replaced by a variety of drills, pincers, scalpels and other tools carried in a little locker in the robot's metal side.

In the front of the bulbous metal head glittered two enormous lenses of photoelectric eyes, slightly sunken for better protection. The phonographic speech-apparatus had its small opening beneath the eyes, and the hearing apparatus was entirely concealed within the head.

This was Grag, the robot whom Newton and Simon Wright had built soon after reaching the moon. Newton had thought thus to create life, but had found that though Grag was a loyal servant, and of incredible strength, yet he was not human in mentality. He possessed a certain individuality, a certain original mind, but not of high enough order to satisfy Newton. So the young biologist had kept Grag, but had taken another course in his task – seeing that to create manlike life he must create it of flesh instead of metal.

"Shall I lift the cover now, master?" inquired the huge robot as it paused beside Newton.

"Not yet, Grag," muttered the young biologist. "Five minutes more – five minutes, and we'll know whether or not our synthetic man is a success or a failure."

Elaine Newton, drawn by the voices, came into the laboratory from the living-quarters. In her arms she carried a baby, who squirmed and turned his gray eyes to the light.

"You woke Curtis with your call, Roger," she told her husband. Then she saw his tenseness, and asked quickly, "Is it almost finished?"

"Almost," the biologist answered, not taking his eyes off the gauges on the coffin-like chamber.

There was a little silence, in which the man and woman, and the great robot and the living brain, remained immobile.

Only little Curtis Newton craned his red head to look with wondering, wide gray eyes at everything in the laboratory.

The baby had been born in this lonely underground home on the moon, eight months before. He had grown rapidly – more rapidly than any earth-child. He had seemed to thrive, indeed, upon lunar conditions – but his mother was pale, her eyes shadowed with months of loneliness.

"Time's up!" rasped Simon Wright suddenly.

Swiftly, Newton reached and snapped off the mechanisms whose thrumming died at once. He rapidly unclamped the heavy bolts that held down the cover of the coffin-like chamber.

"Now lift away the cover, Grag!" he told the robot tensely.

The great robot reached down and picked up the massive metal cover as though it were a feather, setting

it aside.

Roger Newton peered down into the chamber, his heart pounding.

"No sign of life!" he said hoarsely. "We've failed, Simon!"

"No – use stimulants!" said the brain's metallic voice quickly. "Quick, Roger."

Thus urged, Newton grasped up instruments and bent frantically to work on the being inside the chamber.

Elaine Newton, standing behind him with little Curtis in her arms, could not see the creature on whom her husband worked. She heard the thrum of brain-jolting vibrations applied, saw the flash of hypodermics. In a moment came a hoarse cry from Newton.

"He's stirring – he lives!"

The creature in the chamber was making clumsy, unskillful movements. Newton reached in, helped the thing out of the oblong box. It would have fallen, had he not held it up.

Elaine Newton gasped in mingled astonishment and horror as she saw the thing that had emerged from that chamber.

A synthetic man! A manlike being whose body was of synthetic flesh made in this laboratory by her husband!

The creature looked only half human as it stood there unclothed except for the belt-like harness about its waist. Its arms and legs had a rubbery, boneless look. Its artificially created flesh was not pink like human flesh, but pure, dead white. The white face had no eyebrows or eyelashes, and there was no hair whatever upon the well-shaped, pure white head.

And though the face had been carefully molded by Newton before the final "setting" of its flesh, though the features were regular and human, something about the dead whiteness of the flesh and the long green eyes gave the synthetic man an unearthly expression. It stood, staring dazedly and unknowingly at the man and the towering metal robot and the brain.

"Put him in a man's clothes and make up his face a little and he'd pass anywhere for human!" cried Roger Newton excitedly.

"Yes," rasped the brain, "and you could make him look like any human by merely desolidifying his flesh, molding it into the desired features, and then resetting it."

"Is he more human than I am, master?" asked Grag. There was a queer worry in the robot's deep voice.

The brain chuckled dryly. "Why are you so infatuated with the idea of being human, Grag?" he asked the robot. "I was human, once, and I wasn't as happy then as I am now."

The synthetic man had stood, gazing around with dazed green eyes. His gaze fell on the red-haired infant in the woman's arms.

Little Curtis Newton crowed and held out his arms toward the white, manlike creature. The synthetic man moved a stumbling step toward him.

Elaine Newton shrank back with a little cry.

"It's all right, dear," her husband told her. Curtis seems to like him."

"It's not normal for a baby to like such a creature!" she exclaimed. "Here, Grag – take Curtis back to his crib."

The big robot took the infant in his great metal arms, at her order, and stumped obediently away. Little Curtis, familiar with the robot, grinned and gurgled contentedly, looking up into the creature's metal face as he was carried off.

"He thinks almost as much of Grag as he does of me," said Elaine tearfully, looking after them. Her red lips quivered as she looked around. "It's wrong to bring him up in this lonely place, Roger – with only a brain and a robot and now a synthetic man, for companions, beside us."

Roger Newton had led the android to a couch, where he gently forced him to lie down, wrapping him in warm blankets. Now he came back to his tearful wife's side.

"We won't have to stay here much longer, dear," he told her elatedly. "If our new creation lives and proves able to learn as much as I think he can, our work is done – we'll have succeeded in creating intelligent life to serve humanity. We'll go back to earth and exhibit him as a model of what can be done."

"Dare we go back to earth?" Elaine asked earnestly, looking up at him. "Victor Kaslan –"

"Kaslan must have forgotten all about us," Newton told her confidently. "We've never heard a thing from him in all the time we've been here. And we'll come back to Earth as the greatest scientists in its history – Kaslan wouldn't dare molest us then."

"Kaslan would dare anything, the man lusts so for power," rasped the brain somberly. "And there are many others like him – many other men who would go to any lengths to possess the powers we have discovered, to use them for their own ambitions.

"We'll worry about that when the time comes," Newton told the Brain "We've enough to do now to give our new creation an education."

In the following days, the android learned with amazing speed. Otho, as they named the synthetic man, had a brain far different from the human – one devised of artificial flesh fibers by Newton and Simon Wright, consisting almost entirely of cortex layers.

Otho learned speech easily. And he learned to walk in one short lesson. The android had marvelous powers of speed and stamina in his rubbery body. He had not the superhuman strength of the robot Grag, but could move far faster, and seemed to delight in swift movement or action of any kind.

Mentally, indeed, Otho was a complete extrovert. It was thus that he differed most from real men. He had no subconscious, no store of inherited instincts, no fears. He had only a wild lust for action of any kind, and a mocking humor that found voice in deviling the simple-minded robot who was his companion.

Toward Newton and the brain, Otho maintained a certain attitude of respect tinged with awe, for he knew they had created him. Toward Elaine, the android seemed eager to serve. But it was little Curtis Newton who drew him most, and he seemed to enjoy holding the crowing, chuckling infant – something that always aroused big Grag to make jealous objections.

"Otho has had sufficient training," Newton declared finally after weeks.

His eyes gleamed as he continued, "Now we're going back and show him to earth – show earth what we've done. He will be the first of a whole race of androids that will spring up to serve mankind."

Elaine's face lit with pure happiness. "Back to earth! When, Roger?"

"At once," her husband said. "Grag, you and Otho go out and take away the rock camouflage around the rocket, so that we can make



OTHO

it ready. Remember your space-suit."

"I need no space-suit, master," reminder the big metal robot in his booming voice.

"That is because you are not human, Grag," said Otho in his hissing, sibilant voice, the android's green eyes glinting with mocking humor. "Only humans need space-suits."

"Am I not as human as Otho, master?" boomed the robot, turning his glittering photoelectric eyes on Newton.

"Go ahead and do as I bade you, and quit quarreling," Newton told them impatiently.

"Aye," rasped Simon Wright's metallic voice dourly. "Being human is nothing to be proud of – when I think of some humans I've known."

When the robot and the android had gone out through the airlock chamber that gave egress onto the lunar surface, Elaine Newton brought her infant son into the laboratory.

She pointed up through the glassite ceiling which framed a great circle of starry space. There amid the stars hulked the huge, cloudy gray sphere of the earth, half in shadow, its continents and seas vaguely outlined through veils of mist.

"See, Curtis," she told the baby happily. "That is where we are going – back to the earth you've never seen."

Little Curtis Newton looked up with wise gray baby eyes at the great sphere, cradled in her arms.

"I feel ashamed now that I've kept you in this wild, lonely place so long," Roger Newton told her, touched by her eager emotion. "I thought too much about my work –"

"Your work is you," she told him fondly. "And now you've succeeded. But I am glad that we're leaving the moon. Somehow, I've had a premonition that we'd never leave it a silly idea that I didn't tell you about."

Newton heard the air-lock door open, and turned surprisedly.

"Grag and Otho back so soon? They can't have been to the rocket in so short a time –"

The voice of Simon Wright rasped with sudden urgency from the resonator in his brain-case.

"That is not Grag and Otho," declared the brain. "I know their steps – these are men –"

Elaine uttered a cry. Newton sprang across the laboratory. They wore space-suits, and carried long flare-pistols.

The face of their leader was clearly visible through his glassite helmet. It was a dark, handsome, hawklike face with black eyes burning exultantly.

"Victor Kaslan!" Newton cried appalledly.

Kaslan, while his men's pistols covered the biologist and his wife, reached up and unscrewed his helmet. His face emerged from it, flushed and triumphant.

"Yes, Newton, it is I," he said throbbingly, his black eyes flashing. "You thought I'd never find you here, didn't you? But I've tracked you down, I've combed the colonized worlds for month after month, and finally I've found you here.

Newton felt a cold fear choking his throat – fear for the girl and the infant who stood frozen behind him.

"You've got me, Kaslan," he said hoarsely. "I can't stop you from doing what you want to. But I'll give you the secrets you ask if you'll not harm my wife and child."

"Make no bargains with him, Roger," rasped Simon Wright, his lens-eyes fixed on Kaslan's face. "He'll not keep them."

"It's too late for you to make bargains anyway, Newton," Kaslan said harshly. "Whatever you possess in this laboratory, all your notes and processes and secrets, are mine now for the taking. And I am taking them."

"And what of us?" Newton asked thickly.

Kaslan's lips curved in a merciless smile. "It would not be wise to leave you living – any of you."

Newton, feeling the ultimate in despair, looked a moment at his wife. And the sight of Elaine's bloodless face and wide, horrified eyes, galvanized the young biologist into action.

He sprang in a flying leap toward a locker in the corner where his own flare-guns were stored. But he never reached it.

Jets of fire from the pistols of Kaslan's men hit him in mid-air and flung him into a scorched, lifeless heap.

Elaine screamed, and thrust her baby onto a table – then leaped to the side of her husband.

"Roger!" she cried, bending over the dead form.

"Elaine look out!" cried the brain wildly.

She did not turn. The flares from Kaslan's pistol struck her side, and she collapsed slowly across her husband.

Little Curtis Newton, upon the table, began to whimper. Kaslan ignored him and strode past the two still forms toward the square serum-case that held Simon Wright's living brain.

The would-be dictator looked contemptuously into the emotionless, glittering lens-eyes of the brain.

"No need to waste a shot on you, Wright," he sneered. "Just disconnecting your perfusion pump is enough."

"Kaslan, you are a dead man now," answered the brain in throbbing metal accents. "Vengeance is coming – I hear it entering now – terrible vengeance."

"He tries to scare me with threats, this miserable bodiless brain!" Kaslan called jeeringly to his man. He reached toward the brain-case. "I'll soon silence you –"

Two figures rushed into the laboratory at that moment. Kaslan and his men spun, appalled, unable to believe their eyes as they stared at the two incredible shapes who entered.

The metal robot and the android! They stood for a moment, staring at the scene of death in the laboratory.

"Grag! Otho! Kill!" screamed the brain's metallic voice. "They have slain your master – kill them! Kill them!"

With a wordless roar of rage from the robot, with a fierce, heart-stopping cry from the synthetic man, the two leaped forward.

Kaslan got in one wild shot – but the flare of fire seared the robot's side without harming the metal. Next moment, Grag's huge fist had smashed the plotter's head into pulp.

Otho had seized another of the three, his rubbery arms winding around the man's neck, choking him. Grag leaped toward the third, as he screamed and strove to flee.

In a moment, the two lay dead like the others. And Grag and the blazing-eyed android stood, gazing wildly

around for more enemies.

"Set me down by your master and mistress!" ordered the brain urgently. "They may still live!"

The robot picked up the brain-case and set it down by the two limp forms. Wright's glassy lens-eyes moved, intently surveying the two bodies.

"Newton is dead, but Elaine is not dead yet!" the brain declared. "Lift her, Grag."

With ponderous metal arms, the huge robot bent and raised the girl to a sitting position. Her face was colorless, eyes closed, and there was a ghastly wound burned in her side.

In a moment, she opened dying eyes. Wide, dark, filled with shadows, they looked up at brain, robot and android.

"My – baby," she whispered. "Bring me Curtis."

It was Otho who sprang to obey. The android gently set the squalling infant down beside her.

The dying girl looked down at the child, with heart-breaking emotion in her fading eyes.

"To leave him without mother or father," she choked.

"Elaine, we three will watch over little Curtis!" cried the brain. "We'll protect him!"

"Do not take him to earth!" she whispered in frantic appeal. "There are hundreds there like Kaslan who will be searching for his father's secrets, and will destroy him. Keep him here upon the moon, until he grows to manhood."

"We will," promised the brain, his lens-eyes fixed on her dying face. "Grag and Otho and I will rear him here safely."

"And when he is a man," whispered Elaine, "tell him of his father and mother and how they died – how those who wished to use the gifts of science for evil ends killed his parents. Tell him to war always against those who would pervert science to ambition."

"I will tell him," promised the brain, and in its toneless metallic voice was a queer catch.

The girl's hand moved feebly to touch the cheek of the squalling infant. Into her dying eyes came a strange, farseeing expression.

"I seem to see little Curtis a man," she whispered, her eyes raptly brilliant. "A man such as the system has never known before, fighting against all enemies of humanity –"

The light died out in her eyes. Her dark head rolled back against the cheek of her dead husband, as though in death she nestled against him.

Grouped around the two dead forms, the brain and the robot and the synthetic man stared wordlessly at each other. Only the whimpering of the frightened infant broke the silence in the lonely laboratory on the moon.

IV. A LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

The following letter was sent to fanzine editors to announce the arrival of Captain Future, a new magazine aimed at a younger scientifiction audience.

This particular letter was copied from Bob Tucker's 'zine "Le Zombie" (Vol. 2 #4 – October 28, 1939). Thanks to Dave Kurzman for digging up this gem.

"Dear Mr. Tucker,

Can there be anything new in scientifiction? We say yes – and offer **CAPTAIN FUTURE**. Fellows, **CAPTAIN FUTURE** is tops in scientifantasy! A brand new book-length magazine novel devoted exclusively to a star-studded quartet of the most glamorous characters in the Universe. And the most colorful planeteer in the Solar System to lead them – **CAPTAIN FUTURE**. You'll find Captain Future the man of Tomorrow! His adventures will appear in each & every issue of the magazine that bears his name.

He ought to be good. We spent months planning the character, breathing the fire of life into him. For we feel that the man who controls the destinies of nine planets has to be good. But don't take our word for it – get your first copy of **CAPTAIN FUTURE** the day it hits the newsstands and marvel at the wizard of science as he does his stuff on every thrilling page.

You'll find Captain Future the most dynamic space-farer the cosmos has ever seen. A super-man who uses the forces of super-science so that you will *believe* in them. You'll see Captain Future's space craft, the *Comet* spurting thru the ether with such hurricane fury you'll think Edmond Hamilton, the author, has hurled you on a comet's tail.

And you'll agree that Captain Future's inhuman cavalcade – the Futuremen – supplement the world's seven wonders. There's Grag, the metal robot; Otho, the synthetic android; and Simon Wright, the living brain. A galaxy of the ultimate immortal forces!

So come on ... give the most scintillating magazine ever to appear on the scientifiction horizon the once over. You'll be telling us, as we tell you now, that **CAPTAIN FUTURE** represents fantasy at it's unbeatable best.

CAPTAIN FUTURE will appear at all newsstands in a few weeks. Price, 15 cents. First issue features Edmond Hamilton's novel, **CAPTAIN FUTURE AND THE SPACE EMPEROR**. Cover by Rosen. Illustrations by Wesso. Short stories by Eric Frank Russell and O. Sarri. Brand new departments – **THE WORLDS OF TOMORROW**, **THE FUTUREMEN**, **UNDER OBSERVATION**, and **THE MARCH OF SCIENCE**.

That's all.

– *Leo Margulies*"

And so Captain Future was introduced to Science Fiction fans in 1939.

V. ANECDOTES BY EDMOND HAMILTON

"... when I was writing the first novel, the editors wrote me that they wanted to change 'Mr. Future' to 'Captain Future'.

All other changes from the original outline were my ideas. I felt I could not write stories on the outline as it was."

"The CF stories were changed somewhat in editing. Also, to tell the truth, so little was paid me for the early ones that they were all written first draft right out of the typewriter. After the first five or six, they paid me more, and I then did two drafts and they improved a bit.

Most titles were not changed. The first CF story I called THE HORROR ON JUPITER."

"Here is another interesting anecdote about CF that nobody but myself knows. They used as you might have noticed a column in the back of the magazine called THE FUTURE OF CAPTAIN FUTURE, telling what the next story was about. I used to send them a synopsis of a dozen pages, and they would write this column from that. But in PLANETS IN PERIL ... they were in too much of a hurry to wait for my synopsis. So the editor wrote a column about the next novel, making the title and story right up out of his own head and calling it THE FACE OF THE DEEP."

"Here is another equally strange anecdote. In late 1941 I told the editors I could not continue the CF series because I was expecting to be in the Army soon. They got William Morrison (Joseph Samachson) to write two CF novels, WORLDS TO COME and DAYS OF CREATION. Early in 1942 I was rejected for Army service for minor physical reasons. I then told them I could write CF again, and did so. In 1942 or early 1943, I submitted a synopsis for a CF novel called OUTLAW WORLD. The main point of the novel-idea I had was that CF would lose his memory and wouldn't know he was CF. The editor approved the synopsis and I went ahead and wrote the novel. Then ... I think it was Spring 1944 ... appeared CF magazine with one of Morrison's novels, entitled DAYS OF CREATION. I was horrified to read it and find that it had the same plot-idea ... that of CF losing his memory.

The editor had okayed my plot-idea, forgetting that he already bought the same plot-idea from Morrison! I was terribly upset for everyone would think Hamilton was imitating "Brett Sterling's" story. So I sat down and rewrote about two-thirds of OUTLAW WORLD and sent it to the editor, explaining that there had been a mistake on his part and that I had rewritten the story so that the same gag would not be used. The editor never even answered my letter. But when they did print my OUTLAW WORLD later, they did use my rewritten version."

VI. "MEET THE AUTHOR"



1. Edmond Hamilton:

NOW it is the turn of master sciencefictionist Edmond Hamilton to step into the spotlight and explain the whys and wherefores of how he got that way. His current novel, *OUTLAW WORLD*, is one of his best, so he wins his place with oak leaf clusters.

It's good to have the original creator of Captain Future back on the job again after a term in olive drab, not only to turn out more Curt Newtons, but to pen other pseudo-science and fantasy yarns in his inimitable



EDMOND HAMILTON

style, which is never drab. In case you are wondering what a science fiction author looks like, here is a picture of the man himself. And here's what he has to say:

One of the toughest jobs a writer has is trying to write a few lines about himself. I've tackled this chore a couple of times in the past, and each time I've found it harder than try-

ing to do twice as many words of fiction.

When Joe Doakes, writer, sits down to do a little piece about himself, he finds himself smack on the horns of a dilemma. He can write a modest little piece intimating that he is a quiet guy who never did anything and doesn't deserve any notice. But if he does, the readers are likely to declare, "Doakes is a worm."

On the other hand, he can give subtle, not-too-blatant hints to the effect that he is a combination of D'Artagnan, Casanova and Einstein. That will be interesting, all right. But those who read it will probably announce, "Doakes is an egotistic ass."

In an effort to-steer a middle course, I will simply give a few of the vital statistics and pass to more interesting subjects. The statistics – white and unmarried and a little too old for the military, say they; some two hundred-odd published stories behind me, and I hope some more ahead.

Until the war cut off civilian travel, I knocked around a good bit between Canada and Panama. But the only place I ever went back to five times is Mexico, where my variety of Spanish always puts people in stitches and does much to further good relations between the two countries. The tragedy of my life was when the tourists discovered Acapulco and living went up from a buck and a half a day to nine dollars.

The most interesting thing about any science-fiction writer, I should think, is why he does it – why he spends year after year writing fantastic stories. And believe it or not, the answer is childishly simple. It is because the writers are science-fiction fans, and the deepest dyed fans of all.

Perhaps that statement will be challenged by some of the younger fans. I've met a lot of them across the country, I think they're swell people and I've had a lot of good times with 'em. But I've never met any who had any deeper enthusiasm for fantasy fiction than the average s-f writer.

In my own case, though it sounds like a big lie, I was an enthusiastic science fiction fan before I could read. That was way back in the halcyon times years before World War One, when H. G. Wells published an article in the old Metropolitan

Magazine called "The Things that Live on Mars." I couldn't decipher the text but the fantastic illustrations got me.

Later on, I graduated to the old weekly magazines that ran occasional fantasies. Julius Unger, that indefatigable bibliophile of science fiction, once dug up some of my own published fan-letters from those old journals and cast them in my teeth.

All that was a long time ago. I've done a lot of reading in three or four languages since then. But I will still always drop

anything in my library for a new science-fiction story, and I still get as much blast out of a good one as ever.

The point that I'm trying to get over is that science-fiction writers turn out the stuff because they like it. If they didn't, they'd turn to the far easier existence of riveters or refrigerator-salesmen. And if anyone says that that would be wonderful, I here and now denounce him as a low character unworthy of fandom.

2. Manly Wade Wellman:

MANLY Wade Wellman, who assumes the mantle of Captain Future in this issue of *STARTLING STORIES*, is a writer so well known not only to science-fictionists but to less specialized reading publics that he has not troubled to say much about himself. He has, in fact, been the subject of previous biographical sketches in this column.

Suffice it to say that the author of *THE SOLAR INVASION* was born in West Africa, son of a scientist, and has truly been around within the limits of this small sphere. A football player at the University of Utah, he has in his vast and variegated storehouse of personal knowledge a fine background of American Indian life as it is today.

From this background, he has evolved a modern Indian detective which recently won a national prize in a well-known detective story magazine. And since the Wade in his name implies that he is a direct descendant of great Confederate Cavalry General Wade Hampton, he is presently engaged upon a voluminous biography of this spade-bearded old battler.

His most recent appearance in *STARTLING STORIES* came a couple of years ago with the fondly remembered and stirring *STRANGERS ON THE HEIGHTS*. He is, in truth, a person of vast versatility and good humor, whose fame among fantacists and science-fictionists alike is richly deserved.

Feeling rightly that his previous biographical sketches provide sufficient personal introduction to *SS* readers, he has here concerned himself more with the implications of dimensional travel as hinted at in *THE SOLAR INVASION*.

Says Mr. Wellman:

To Captain Future and his friends, flight between stars is a commonplace – before we ourselves know it, it may be commonplace with us. Most of the scientific doubters have

stopped laughing and are busy over blueprints.

To reach another world of our own universe means a journey of light-years-perhaps – and it is comprehensible. To reach another world of another dimension may take only a step (in the right direction, a direction toward which no indicator can now point up) and it still beggars our imaginations, here in the twentieth century, a whole civilization less developed than Captain Future.

Some time it will happen, that journey between dimensions. The soundest physicists allow that the extra dimensions exist, beyond our narrow awareness of space and time. When the journey is first made, it may be an accident. The pioneers may never come back. Scientists and adventurers will and must go on from there, by trial and error to success, as with the first cockleshell voyages from Europe to America, the first overseas plane flights, the first attempts to reach the Moon, Venus and Mars, which attempts are surely almost upon us.

And then all the wonders that science fiction gapes at today will be commonplaces – Mars will be an irritating flat desert with little water or vegetation or other comforts, Venus an oppressive jungle, Jupiter a place where extra gravity' plays hob with your blood pressure, Pluto a wintry dim spot where you wouldn't exile your most irritating in-law. We've already looked at these places at long range, and any day now we may be flying over for a closer look, and familiarity will breed contempt. But other dimensions –

It will take a Captain Future, with an adaptable Otho, a durable Grag, and an all-wise Brain, to cope with the unthinkable and unspeakable to be met with. If they get back, maybe they won't be able to explain what they encountered, any more than you can describe differences of red, yellow and blue to a man blind from birth. We'll all have to go, and perhaps use more senses than five to do justice to the experience. After the first new dimension, it will take some time and thought to comprehend and invade the others.

And at that time, if peradventure this story still exists in a museum of curiosia, a time capsule or a dusty library vault, it will be good for a hearty cosmic laugh, for not foreseeing even the least of the true wonders of Dimension X.

– *Manly Wade Wellman*

VII. "A CHAT WITH FUTURE" A LETTER FROM EDMOND HAMILTON

I thought maybe I ought to write you about a talk I had with Captain Future the other night.

What's that – do I talk with Captain Future? Sure I do! Where else do you suppose I learned the details of all his adventures. If not from Curt Newton himself?

How does he manage to talk with me, when he's far in the future from my own time? Well, as nearly as I can figure it out, he projects an achronic psycho-beam back along the time-dimension. It just happens that I'm able to pick up this mental message, and that's why he relies on me to tell his exploits to our own twentieth century. Of course, some people insist that I just imagine he sends those messages, and that I make it all up in my own mind. But I know better.

Anyway, the last time I heard from Captain Future, I mustered up courage and shot a question back at him.

I asked him, "Couldn't you be a little more specific about some of these scientific marvels you talk about? A number of people who read about your exploits would like to have some of these things explained in more detail."

"For instance?" he shot back. "Well, for instance, you refer to something called 'an ionoscope,'" I told him. "You tell me it's an instrument that can pick up a rocket-ship's space-trail by detecting its ionized discharge. But you don't tell how the ionoscope works."

"Why, that's simple," Curt assured me. "An ionoscope simply consists of four matched Wollensi electro-lenses, mounted in series between two Bradley filters –"

"Hold on a minute!" I begged. "That doesn't mean anything to me. I don't know what a Wollensi electro-lens or a Bradley filter are."

"Of course, you don't," he retorted. "Those instruments haven't even been thought of, back in your time. That's why I don't try to explain every detail of my own science to you. People of your age couldn't understand those details. Could you explain to one of the Pilgrim

Fathers just how a radio works? You could tell him what the radio did, but could you make him understand *how* it did it?"

"I guess not," I admitted.

"No more can I explain the detailed workings of the science of *my* time to the people of *yours*," Captain Future declared.

"I can understand that," I agreed. "But there's one other thing some people can't figure. Why is it you don't make use more often of some of the swell scientific weapons you acquired in your past exploits? Like the size-changing device you took off Ul Quorn, and the dematerializer you took away from the Space Emperor."

"Holy space-imps, I'd have to have a ship ten miles long to carry around *all* that stuff wherever I go!" Curt exclaimed. "And I wouldn't take them, even then. You see, those weapons and inventions are too dangerous for the System even to know about. That's why I wrested them away from their possessors. That's why I keep 'em locked up in the trophy-hall of our Moon-laboratory, where *nobody* will get his hands on them and use them to blow things apart. And they're going to stay there where they're safe."

"One more question," I begged, as I sensed he was about to sign off. "There's another chap somewhere around your time who seems to be sending back mental messages about his space-exploits, and adventures. He calls himself Sergeant Saturn. Did you ever hear of him?"

"Sergeant Saturn?" Captain Future laughed. "Sure, I've heard of him. He is a bibulous old Earthman, who was never out of the Solar System in his life. But he gets full of some crazy drink he invented called Xeno, and then goes out and tells gorgeous lies about his experiences in space. Out around the spacemen's joints from here to Pluto, they still say that nobody ever lived who could stretch the truth like Sergeant Saturn."

VIII. ADDITIONAL ARTICLES

1. "The Writers of CAPTAIN FUTURE" by Jerry Page:

The first issue of Captain Future was dated Winter, 1940 and featured the novel "Captain Future and the Space Emperor", by Edmond Hamilton. What followed were seventeen issues, all featuring novels about the good Captain and his unusual trio of helpers: Grag the Robot, Otho the Android, and Simon Wright, a scientist who's brain had been transplanted into a box. Together they were to the spacelanes what Doc Savage and his pals were to the jungles and back alleys of the thirties. After the last issue of the magazine, a trio of the novels

appeared in Startling Stories. In 1950 and 1951, seven more Captain Future stories appeared, these of short story and novelet length.

Most of the novels and all of the shorter works were written by Hamilton, but two other writers wrote novels in the series when it appeared Hamilton would be unable to continue the series, and the purpose of this article is to discuss them.

The Captain Future stories were as follows.

In Captain Future:

CAPTAIN FUTURE AND THE SPACE EMPEROR	Win 40	Edmond Hamilton
CALLING CAPTAIN FUTURE	Spr 40	Edmond Hamilton
CAPTAIN FUTURE'S CHALLENGE	Sum 40	Edmond Hamilton
THE TRIUMPH OF CAPTAIN FUTURE	Fall 40	Edmond Hamilton
CAPTAIN FUTURE AND THE SEVEN SPACE STONES	Win 41	Edmond Hamilton
STAR TRAIL TO GLORY	Spr 41	Edmond Hamilton
THE MAGICIAN OF MARS	Sum 41	Edmond Hamilton
THE LOST WORLD OF TIME	Fall 41	Edmond Hamilton
THE QUEST BEYOND THE STARS	Win 42	Edmond Hamilton
OUTLAWS OF THE MOON	Spr 42	Edmond Hamilton
THE COMET KINGS	Sum 42	Edmond Hamilton
PLANETS IN PERIL	Fall 42	Edmond Hamilton
THE FACE OF THE DEEP	Win 43	Edmond Hamilton

(The remainder of the novels in Captain Future were published under the house name "Brett Sterling." The name given is the actual name of the author of the story.)

WORLDS TO COME	Spr 43	Joseph Samachson
THE STAR OF DREAD	Sum 43	Edmond Hamilton

(There was no Fall 1943 issue.)

MAGIC MOON	Win 44	Edmond Hamilton
DAYS OF CREATION	Spr 44	Joseph Samachson

(At this point Captain Future ceased publication.

The remainder of the series was published in Startling Stories.)

RED SUN OF DANGER	Spr 45	Edmond Hamilton
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(At this point the "Brett Sterling" name was dropped and authors' real names were used henceforth.)

OUTLAW WORLD	Win 46	Edmond Hamilton
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THE SOLAR INVASION	Fall 46	Manly Wade Wellman
(This was the final novel in the series and the last of the Futuremen for three years, at which point the series resumed in Startling, in novelet length.)		
THE RETURN OF CAPTAIN FUTURE	Jan 50	Edmond Hamilton
CHILDREN OF THE SUN	May 50	Edmond Hamilton
THE HARPERS OF TITAN	Sep 50	Edmond Hamilton
PARDON MY IRON NERVES	Nov 50	Edmond Hamilton
MOON OF THE UNFORGOTTEN	Jan 51	Edmond Hamilton
EARTHMEN NO MORE	Mar 51	Edmond Hamilton
BIRTHPLACE OF CREATION	May 51	Edmond Hamilton

At that point, the series ended. Startling died in 1954, and while the company responsible for the magazines continued to publish pulps, primarily westerns, into 1970, there was no further attempt on their part to publish any magazines of new science fiction stories, much less to resume Captain Future. Some of the novels were reprinted by them in paperback form, and that was it.

But what about the men who wrote the novels.

The writer most associated with the series, of course, is Ed Hamilton. He was born in Youngstown, Ohio in 1904 and studied physics with the intention of becoming an electrical engineer. His first story, "The Monster God of Mamurth" appeared in *Weird Tales* in 1926. He published many stories in WT in the twenties, including a series called "The Interstellar Patrol," said to be a favorite of A. Merritt. In the 60s, all but one of them appeared in the two Ace paperbacks, Crashing Suns and Outside the Universe.

Science fiction was an important factor in the survival of *Weird Tales* during the twenties and in his early stories Hamilton seems to have originated most of the conventions of space opera, and many of early sf in general. Sam Moskowitz has argued, however, that he was less influential than might appear to be the case because of the sf field's disdain of the sort of "weird stuff" to be found in WT. His first story in *Amazing* was "The Comet Doom", in the January 1928 issue.

In the thirties he became one of the most prolific of sf writers. While popular, he was sometimes patronized by sf fans as "World Wrecker" Hamilton, and regarded as inferior to such writers as E.E. Smith, John Campbell and even his old pal Jack Williamson, despite the fact he published this sort of fiction before they had.

This attitude continued to plague him even after the war when his sf output slowed down, but his writing became stronger and more polished. Time and again he demonstrated, superior talent, but never seemed to get the full credit he deserved for it. It is said that he considered Edgar Rice Burroughs one of the most underrated

of science fiction writers. That may be so, but Hamilton is right up there with him.

In an interview about Captain Future he admitted that he was not too pleased with the juvenile slant he was ordered to give it initially, and he made efforts to improve the series as he went along. Because of the low rate of payment on the first few books, he was forced to concentrate on better paying work during the day and write his Captain Future novels after hours, a chapter a night.

Manly Wade Wellman wrote just about everything: westerns, mysteries, even non-fiction. He won the first short story competition held by Ellery Queen's *Mystery Magazine*, and he beat out writers like William Faulkner to do it. He was also the winner of an Edgar from the Mystery Writers of America for a collection of true crime pieces.

He appeared in *Weird Tales* as far back as 1927. The first sf magazine in which he appeared was the Spring, 1931 *Wonder Quarterly* ("When Planets Clashed"). During the early 40s he was a frequent contributor of space opera to the *Thrilling* magazines, as well as *Planet Stories* and *Amazing*. He was also an occasional contributor to John Campbell's *Astounding* and *Unknown*.

His major talent was in the horror field where he created a number of memorable phantom fighters, not least of them John the Balladeer in *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*, but also including John Thunstone and Judge Pursuivant. He sometimes wrote under the names Gans T. Field and Levi Crow. He used the house names Will Garth (*Thrilling*) and Gabriel Barclay (*Popular Publications*).

Joseph Samachson has written quite a bit of science fiction, all of it but his Captain Future novels as William Morrison. For a time he wrote the column "Science Stage" for *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*. He was a chemist who wrote juvenile novels and, in fact, is the author of a juvenile sf novel

(Mel Oliver and Space Rover on Mars, 1954). He also wrote a pair of non-Captain Future novels for the Thrilling pulps: "Two Worlds to Save" in the Sep 1942 issue of Startling, and "The Gears of Time" in April 1952 issue of Space Stories. But most of his science fiction has been in short form and though much of it has been memorable, he never had a collection and thus is virtually forgotten.

References:

- The Index to the Science Fiction Magazines, 1926-1950
compiled by Donald B. Day, Perri Press, Portland, 1952
- The Index of Science Fiction Magazines 1951-1952
compiled by Norman Metcalf, J. Ben Stark, Publisher, El Cerrito, CA 1968.
- The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy
compiled by Donald H. Tuck. Advent: Publishers, Chicago, 1974.

2. "Edmond Hamilton – Man Of Tomorrow" by Don Hutchison:

Edmond Hamilton was born October 21, 1904 in Youngston, Ohio and was raised on a nearby farm. In his youth he witnessed horses rear up in buggy shafts at the sight of an automobile. In his mature years he was present when Apollo 12 departed on a tail of flame and thunder, outward bound for the moon.

Hamilton was one of the grand Old Masters of the science fiction pulps, one of a handful of future-think wordsmiths who, in order to eke out even a modest existence, were forced to write and sell reams of material to a small and relatively obscure market.

He was almost the perfect pulpster. His imaginative action-packed space operas just about jumped off the page with writer-to-reader urgency. He once recalled how, in putting the finishing touches to an epic space battle, he had become so excited that as he punched his typewriter the machine "walked" over the surface of his old flat-topped desk – with the writer following it, banging away at it as he finished his climatic scene.

Such stuff wasn't meant to be great literature, but his readers caught the excitement. The Edmond Hamilton byline sold magazines.

As a full-time pulp writer Hamilton worked other fiction categories: mystery, detective, horror and straight ad-venture; but his eyes were on the stars and his heart belonged to space.

When he was young the term science fiction did not exist – it had yet to be invented – but the precious farm lad devoured the scientific romances of **H.G. Wells** and **Jules Verne** and later snapped up copies of such pulps

Mort Weisinger, who edited the first several issues of Captain Future (and who may have originated the idea), later left the pulps and went to work for DC Comics where, for years, he guided the destiny of Superman Comics. He was responsible for bringing several writers from the sf field to the comics, including Ed Hamilton.

as **All-Story** and **Argosy** when they featured the fantastic serials of such pioneers as **Edgar Rice Burroughs** and **Ray Cummings**.

As Hamilton recalled it in a fan magazine essay published in 1934: "I have been a strong science fiction fan since 1916, when I started in with the old **Argosy** tales of Burroughs, **Julian Hawthorne** and others. I had a newspaper route about that time and when Merritt's long-awaited sequel to "The Moon Pool" came out, I carried papers one night each week with the **All-Story Magazine** held three inches before my eyes, avoiding automobiles and street-cars by the grace of God and heaving every paper on the wrong porch."

At an early age he determined to become a professional writer himself and devote his own life to entertaining people, as he had been entertained, with yarns of derring-do on far planets and wondrous worlds. At the time of that momentous decision he had no idea that science fiction was about to become a category in its own right and would eventually encompass scores of magazines specializing in just that sort of fiction.

When Edmond Hamilton's first pulp yarn appeared in the August 1926 issue of **Weird Tales**, science fiction magazines were just five-months old (**Amazing Stories**, April 1926 was the first). Hamilton's initial venture into sf, bearing the simplistic title "Across Space", was published only a month later. Within a short time he was routinely selling stories that took men out beyond the planets to the stars, then to other galaxies, and finally outside the known universe altogether.

As **Sam Moskowitz** pointed out in his book SEEK-

ERS OF TOMORROW, Hamilton was probably one of the most underestimated (although certainly not unappreciated) writers of science fiction. Author of the **Captain Future** stories, Ed's adventure novels earned him the nickname "World-Saver" (or alternatively, "World-Wrecker") Hamilton, due to his penchant for smashing planets and stars around like so many billiard balls. Story titles such as "Crashing Suns" and "The Universe Wreckers" amply prove this. If characterization was weak in his early stories, Ed made up for it with his imaginative ideas and express-train narrative drive. Many of his concepts were innovative and were often "rediscovered" by other writers in later years.

Among the concepts pioneered by Hamilton was the theme of interstellar adventure itself; the notion of a galactic empire complete with its own law-and-order Interstellar Patrol; the Fortean concept of Earth as property; the evolution of plant life and the evolution of entire worlds; along with the concept of speeded-up evolution; the employment of absolute darkness as a weapon; the use of ancient mythology as a basis for sf; the idea of recruiting people from different time periods; aliens in metal bodies; creatures of flame; matter transmitters; and the introduction of floating cities; and animals with human intelligence. There were many, many others.

In that same 1934 fan article, Hamilton described his basic working methods: "I sometimes write down an interesting title and then work up a story from it ... At other times a passage or note in a scientific work will suggest a story. I can do nothing with a yarn until I have the end of it in mind. Time of writing is widely variable – I've done 10,000 word stories in two days, and then again I've worked on a so and so of the same length for four full months."

"I write a first draft and as I go along change the plot, characters, and settings to suit the developments. Then go over it and chop it up with pencil and make a final draft. Tried sending out first draft stuff a few years back, but found it contained too many slips and that I didn't have enough control over the development of the story."

"I get keenly interested in a science-fiction story once I've started it, and in fact, I can't imagine anyone writing this kind of fiction who isn't a bug on it ... I think the chief value of science-fiction is not so much that it imparts scientific information as that it gives the reader an interest in science. It tends to make him think of science, not as something dry and repellent, but as something that is pregnant with many interesting and exciting possibilities for man's future."

As his career progressed, the old superscience melodramas gave way to more thoughtful stories in which depth of characterization and emotional drives became prominent. Hamilton proved he could write as sophisticated a story as the next man and some of his short stories from his later period are small masterpieces.

Ironically, we seldom choose our own monument. In 1940 (at a time when a new and more mature kind of science fiction was about to be developed by men like **Heinlein**, **Asimov**, and **Sturgeon**) Edmond Hamilton was assigned the job of writing a series of booklength novels for a brand new pulp magazine: **Captain Future**. The new magazine was designed to carry breathless adventures of a futuristic **Doc Savage**-type superhero, aimed mainly at teenagers.

Seventeen issues of **Captain Future**, **Man of Tomorrow**, were issued between 1940 and 1944, and fifteen of the novels were written by Hamilton. After the magazine folded due to war-time paper shortages three more Captain Future novels were published in **Startling Stories**, one of the publisher's companion magazines. In 1950 the character was revived once again for a series of seven novelets in **Startling Stories**. They were the final curtain call for Captain Future (Curtis Newton) and his three bizarre assistants, Grag the robot, Otho the android, and Simon Wright, the Brain – a living human brain imprisoned forever within a transparent, indestructible case.

Captain Future was not Edmond Hamilton's own creation. Legend has it that he was given the assignment for the series while attending The First World Science Fiction Convention in New York City, July 2, 1939. **Leo Margulies**, editorial director for **Standard Magazines**, was also at the convention and had been impressed by the enthusiasm of the early science fiction fans. Margulies vowed on the spot to create a new pulp hero magazine aimed at younger readers in an effort to win them over to the new brand of future fiction. He reasoned that this innovation would do for science fiction what **The Shadow** had done for mystery and what Doc Savage had done for adventure.

Originally the new magazine was to be called **Mr. Future ... Wizard of Science**. Hamilton was supplied a story and character outline by the publishers. In the publishers' outline Curt Newton was not just a man of heroic proportions but a biological mutant born of radioactive emanations, like some monster in a 1950's horror flick. Hamilton found the outline unusable and was forced to go to New York and argue with the publishers for days until the proposed set-up was changed to his liking. Eventually the character – now called

Captain Future – emerged in a form acceptable to Hamilton, his publishers, and their suitably impressed young readers.

Hamilton called the first novel, "The Horror on Jupiter," but that title was changed to "Captain Future and the Space Emperor," as the editors decided that they should capitalize on the Captain Future name.

In that opening number Curt Newton was immediately set up as the hero of all the worlds. The reactions of mere mortals was nothing short of idolatrous. A strapping red-haired scientific adventurer, Captain Future was the past's future crime fighter, an implacable Nemesis of all oppressors and exploiters of the System's human and planetary races. Whenever a menace threatened to conquer, enslave, or destroy hapless Mankind, the President of Terra had but to send out a distress call to the good Captain's secret base on the moon (a kind of extended bat-signal) and Captain Future would zoom out, proton pistol blazing, to do battle with the wicked.

In one form or another, the Captain Future series ran for twelve years and almost a million words. Because of low pay and rushed deadlines Hamilton was forced to write most of the early books in first draft only. When he caught his breath he began to give them more care and an increasing amount of inventive vitality. Eventually he took the good Captain and his aides outside the Universe itself to the very birthplace of creation – where Captain Future had to wrestle with the temptation of his own godhood. No pulp hero could go farther.

Few would claim that the saga of Captain Future represented the best of Edmond Hamilton's work. Despite his preference for action-oriented fiction, Hamilton was a mature and sensitive man. Of his 300 published works he is best remembered for such emotionally moving short story classics as "Requiem" and "He That Hath Wings," and at least one novel, "Star Kings," which appears to be an enduring favorite with readers of all generations. Most of his later novels ("City at World's End," "The Star of Life") are examples of science fiction at its adventuresome best.

All of the Captain Future novels were republished by Popular Library in the late 1960's. Hamilton re-

ceived no royalties for the reprints but they did serve to introduce Captain Future to a new generation of fans. These books are still to be found in used book stores. They are worth collecting, not only for the Hamilton stories, but because three of the cover paintings are by Frank Frazetta, and another is by Jeff Jones. (The rest of the covers are pretty dreadful.)

While the Captain Future novels were aimed at a younger audience than most science fiction magazines, the author's fecund imagination and zest for story telling insured that they were great fun to experience. As a result they have survived for nearly half a century and are still being read today. Who can say how many young readers were influenced by them and went on to help shape the very future they dreamed about? There are no statistics on such things,

A few years before his death in 1977 Ed Hamilton and his wife Leigh Brackett (a much-loved pulp author in her own right) were invited to sit in the reporters' press box at Cape Kennedy and they watched Apollo 12 take off for the moon. Ed later wrote about his reactions to the take-off:

"If anyone at that moment had asked me, 'Was it worthwhile to spend 44 years writing science fiction?' I would have unhesitatingly answered 'Yes'. For I feel we had a part ... a very tiny part ... in this. We did not plan or build or launch this craft. We only dreamed about it. But perhaps the dreams helped a little to create a climate in which it **could** be planned and launched and built ..."

"Without a single exception all of my oldest friends, and some of them go back forty years, are science fictionists. Many others who were friends are now gone. And as the rocket soared up into the clouds, I found myself thinking of them all ... looking back to the days when we were all looking forward, when we met in tiny groups and tried to peer into the future, discussed it, argued about it, and attempted awkwardly to put it into fiction. And it did not seem to me, with that thunder still echoing in my ears, that what we did or tried to do was completely unworthy."

Who is to say where imagination ends and reality begins?

3. "Pardon his Iron Nerves" by Phillip Rey:

CAPTAIN FUTURE

"Curt Newton was a tall, well-built young man. His unruly shock of red hair towered six feet four above the floor, and his wide lithe shoulders threatened to burst the jacket of his gray synthesilk zipper-suit. He wore a flat tungstite belt in which was holstered a queer-looking pistol, and on his left hand was a large, odd ring.

This big young man's tanned, handsome face had lines of humor around the mouth, crinkles of laughter around the eyes. Yet behind the bantering humor in those gray eyes there lurked something deep and purposeful, some hidden, overpowering determination. That tall, cheerful, red-haired young adventurer of the ready laugh and flying fists was the implacable Nemesis of all oppressors and exploiters of the System's human and planetary races. Combining a gay audacity with an unswervable purposefulness and an unparalleled mastery of science, he had blazed a brilliant trail across the nine worlds in defense of the right." [#1]

INTRODUCTION

Four decades after his final departure for some uncharted region of the universe, Captain Future is still well remembered by a few enthusiastic readers throughout the world. Unlike characters like the Shadow or Doc Savage, whose magazines attained 325 and 181 issues respectively, our good Captain only appeared in twenty novels of spatial challenges and enigmas. Of these twenty novels, Edmond Hamilton wrote seventeen between 1939 and 1943. The fans would have liked to see other book-length stories featuring Curt

Newton and his Futuremen but the pulp magazine was canceled due to paper shortage. Hamilton brought his Captain Future back in seven novelets which were published in *Startling Stories* in 1950 and 1951. The Curt Newton he described had matured, and the stories themselves had another flavor of heroism. In all the Captain Future adventures he wrote, Edmond Hamilton concentrated a whole set of science fiction themes and created peoples, races and mythologies that gave these novels a lasting flavor to those who read them. A flavor I have now been tasting for fifteen years with almost always the same excitement and enthusiasm.

Almost!

Almost, because there have been times when I wondered about Curt Newton and his heroic behavior. Times when I would have liked each character to have more importance in the stories. Times when I felt Hamilton had not done such a good job with these characters, who had no psychology and acted according to a set of prescribed rules of stereotyped behavior. But that was all before I knew that the pulps were products of an industry of stories written for the pleasure and entertainment of the readers. Not until I started to read pulp fanzines and books on popular fiction did I suspect that the Captain Future novels were anything but what scholars call formula stories. And at that particular moment, I thought that instead of finding fault with stories written by Hamilton, I could use my critical ideas in order to write this non too serious essay on our good Captain's psyche. The novels I based my study on are only those written by Edmond Hamilton and they are:

Captain Future and the Space Emperor
Calling Captain Future
Captain Future's Challenge
The Triumph of Captain Future
Captain Future and the Seven Space Stones
Star Trail to Glory
The Magician of Mars
The Lost World of Time
Quest Beyond the Stars

Outlaws of the Moon
The Comet Kings
Planets in Peril
The Face of the Deep
The Star of Dread
Magic Moon
The Red Sun of Danger
Outlaw World

HERO AND READERS

While reading an adventure story, the reader generally identifies himself with the hero. By this identification the reader of a Captain Future story is carried away into an imaginary solar system created by Hamilton for this series. In this fictional solar system, the author plotted adventures for the Captain and his Futuremen.

The first four novels present us a character, all at once, an invincible and a triumphing hero upon whom all our attention is directed and centered. Either in the title of the magazine *Captain Future Wizard of Science* and *Man of Tomorrow*, or in the title of the stories listed above, the name Captain Future is clearly everywhere because he is "the greatest adventurer in the solar sys-

tem's history, the mysterious awesome figure whose legend dominated the nine worlds. This name and fame had rung around the system." [#1] Captain Future is the true successor of Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers, always ready to fight for freedom.

"Whenever the Solar Government president James Carthew would need of him, he would but signal and Captain Future and the three Futuremen would come." [#1]

The three Futuremen being Otho the lithe android, Grag the towering robot, and Simon Wright, the living brain housed in a transparent metal case.

Captain Future is quite stereotyped and omnipotent. And it is hard for a reader to identify himself to such a perfect hero, with incredible intellectual powers and a great physical strength. So much so that some readers of Captain Future reacted to Curt Newton's all-might and iron nerves in the letter department "Under Observation" of the magazine.

Among the few critical and valid analysis published by the editor, I found the letters of Stanley Kovan to be interesting. They addressed good questions to the author and the editor policy and provided good comments on the value of the novels. For example the "stories are too one sided. One side (always that of Captain Future) has all the advantages, while the other side has almost nothing." [#5] "Just why, may I ask, must Captain Future himself and his companions be the greatest so-ans-sos in the System? Greatest scientific genius, greatest pilot, ..." [#7]

Those were questions which made me think about my favorite hero. Was he really always that great of a Captain? I had no good answer to that question until, one day four years ago, fellow Captain Future fan Chuck Juzek sent me a copy of a letter written by Les & Es Cole for "the Ether Vibrates", the letter department of *Startling Stories*.

"Let us discuss that intellectual giant, the people's cherce, the great lover, the one-and-only Captain Future. We wonder about him. Here he has been going around with the dimpled-darling of the spaceways, Joan Randall, for some ten years, and he has yet to make an honorable woman of her. We think he should – and then retire. Permanently. Speaking psychologically, we could have predicted all this. You see, Fig Newton grew up on the Moon, surrounded by inept fatheads. Never having had a chance to resolve his oedipus, the kid was bound to be a pervert. The Futuremen series has over the year, shown abysmally poor plotting [I don't agree], no scientific background and phony, artificial characters [there is one idea]. In case you didn't get us the first time, we repeat Captain Future is a vacuous, vapid idiot. And that goes for his ghoulish, moribund crew, too!"

That letter, sometimes bitter as gall, nevertheless started me on a deeper reflection about our good Cap-

tain's iron nerves, strong will and artificial character. It nourished an idea I long had in my mind. It helped me find the words to describe a point of view I sometimes took while reading a Captain Future novel (or watched an episode of the Captain Future animated series).

The perspective I introduce here is not made to devalorize Hamilton's work which I like but is one particular look on a hero whose adventures have filled my head with starry dreams, visions of distant galaxies and nebulaes. A character who brought me that "sense of wonder" so dear to Hamilton.

HERO AND LONELINESS

In the adventures of Captain Future, Edmond Hamilton narrates the feats of that extraordinary man either fighting malicious and dangerous criminals or roaming the endless depths of interstellar space in a quest for knowledge and justice. Captain Future is a worthy representative of this issue of heroes who are young, athletic and experts in all the scientific fields. A galactic knight, without fear or weaknesses, who bestows his great skills and qualities to the evolution of the system in which he lives. But because he is different in his thinking and in his behavior from the other men, our hero is destined to loneliness. A loneliness from which springs his heroism.

But how can I speak of loneliness as I know that Captain Future is always with his three comrades Grag, Otho and Simon, and that his valiant heart is beating for the "strikingly pretty" Joan Randall?

Captain Future lives in seclusion on the moon, in his secret laboratory beneath the surface of Tycho crater, with the three Futuremen. In the beginning (of his life), it was not his choice but his mother's wish that he be kept "here upon the moon, until he is grown to manhood." [#1] Isolated from the rest of the human race, little Curtis Newton received, from his three tutors and guardians, an education as no human had ever received before.

"The Brain, with its unparalleled store of scientific knowledge, supervised the boy's education. It was the Brain who instructed Curtis Newton in every branch of science, making him in a short period of years into a complete master of all technical knowledge. And together the bodyless Brain and the brilliant, growing youth delved far beyond the known limits of science and devised instruments of unprecedented nature.

The robot instilled some of his own incredible strength and stamina into the boy, by a system of exercises rigidly maintained in mock struggle, the red-haired youth would pit himself against the great metal creature who could have crushed him in a second had he wished. Gradually, thus, Curt's strength became immense.

The android endowed the growing lad with his own unbelievable swiftness of physical and mental reac-

tions. The two spent many hours on the barren lunar surface, engaged in strange games in which the lad would try to match the android's wonderful agility." [#1]

Taught, trained and modeled to become a hero, I see young Curtis Newton's character as the sum of the nature and the personality of his three unhuman tutors. Not yet Captain Future, the boy still depends on his comrades. It is only when his training is completed that the leader of the Futuremen can enter the stage.

"Finally, when Curt had grown to full manhood, Simon Wright told him how his father and mother had died, and of his mother's dying wish that he war always against those who would use the powers of science for evil ends. And the tall red-haired young adventurer called himself Captain Future." [#1]

At this time, I see a reversal of perspectives. Curtis Newton is not the learner anymore. He has become Captain Future. And from that moment, I consider the Futuremen to be Curtis' aids and followers, not his teachers and tutors anymore. The three will stand by him and fight at his side. I now see them as copies, or incarnation, of one of Curtis Newton's mental or physical skills. The three Futuremen are embodiments, physical manifestations of Captain Future's inner psychic forces.

Thus, Simon Wright represents the scientific, intellectual and serious part of Newton's personality; Otho, the android symbolizes the litheness, the swiftness and physical quickness of our Captain; and Grag, the robot is the magnification of Future's muscular strength and robustness.

It is from that point of view that I see Captain Future's loneliness. The Futuremen being melted inside Curtis' character, Captain Future is truly alone on the moon. Furthermore, that perspective on our hero can be broadened to encompass his human friends on Earth:

James Carthew, the president can be seen as a symbolic father for Curtis. Ezra Gurney the iron-haired marshal might well be Curtis' elder brother. "For the veteran of the Police, in his long years of service, came to know the System's space-lanes and ships and the way of its evildoers better than anyone else." [#1] The same can be said for Captain Future: "As he grew older, Curt Newton started secret voyages through the Solar System [...] and so he came to know not only the Earthman colonies of each world, but much of the unexplored planetary wildernesses also." [#1]

And Curt Newton's most important friend, Miss Joan Randall, is yet to come.

HERO AND WOMEN

Joan Randall is special among Captain Future's friends. She almost is the only woman character of the series and she plays an important role at Curt's side in almost every novel. "She technically is a member of

section three of the Police organization, by far the least known division of all. It is the secret service of the Planet Police." [#6]

Joan, as a secret agent, follows her father's steps in this job. Even if she has to be strong and independent in her work in the police, she is and remains the symbol of beauty, love, tenderness and sensibility in the series. I see her as the incarnation of Curt Newton's deep human feelings. Feelings that are implicitly buried deeply inside every male characters' heart. Feelings that have no true place in action-packed stories. Feelings Edmond Hamilton did not take time to describe at length and which would have given his characters a deeper personality. Feelings that often are kept secret. Secret and private as are Captain Future's deep feelings. They may be love, sadness, fear? Who knows? Curt Newton doesn't share much.

"Curt Newton's eyes were queerly abstracted as he sat at the throttles. He spoke to the Brain, slowly. 'That was a great girl, Simon,' he said. Then he added hastily, 'Not that it can mean anything to me, you understand.'" [#1]

I understand here that Captain Future denies his feelings of love the right to exist and conceals them inside his heart. That is the way his mother wanted it when she died on the Moon. That is the hard path he chose to follow when he swore the oath to be "fighting for the future of the whole Solar System." [#1] He must remain alone to be a hero serving justice.

EVIL HERO

Last but not least of the embodiments of Captain Future's inner psychic forces are the villains of the series. Among the Comet Kings, the Wrecker, Doctor Zarro, the Life Lord or the Space Emperor, "a slender man, with the fine wrists and ankles and ageless looks of a Venusian, the pallid red skin and high forehead of a Martian and the intelligent black eyes and sleek black hair of an Earthman" [#5] stands out with distinction and conspicuity: Ul Quorn, the terrible Magician of Mars.

I consider the despised mixed breed, as Quorn was called, and the other criminals as well, to be shadowy and evil reflections of our "good" Captain. The incarnation of Curtis' dark and dangerous parts: his hatred and his anger. The Magician of Mars is a black Captain. As dark as Darth Vader is in Star Wars. A knight of evil and a perfect match for Captain Future.

"There is nobody in the System to match Future in brilliance and audacity – except myself.' Quorn's voice rang oddly sincere. 'It's too bad that two men like Future and me have to be enemies, that soon I shall have to kill the only man I could accept as my equal. When I kill Future, I'll be killing the only man whom I really respect.'" [#7]

Quorn, like John Sunlight to Doc Savage, is the only

worthy foe Hamilton created to challenge Captain Future. To match Newton's skills and heroism, the true enemy had to have Curt's genius but the exact opposite goal in life. Conquer, kill and destroy instead of freeing and saving.

A CHOSEN PATH

With this last comparison, the picture is complete. On a symbolic plane, Captain Future is lonely. Loneliness is always present under this perspective and it influences his behavior. When he chose to become Captain Future, he also chose loneliness as his partner. And so he is always free to war against crime or leave on a quest for scientific knowledge. As Joan tells him when the series has matured a little, "Curt, you belong to the whole System. I know you love me, but duty comes first – your obligation to use your scientific powers to help the System peoples." [#12]

And duty comes first also because it is intended so by the formula behind the scenes. Curtis Newton had to move along a chosen path. A path chosen by his editors, and also a path chosen by his writer Edmond Hamilton.

THE AUTHOR BEHIND

This analysis of Captain Future has led me to sometimes wonder on Hamilton's maturity regarding the treatment of the characters, and especially the female characters, of his stories. Even if "the man was far more complex and interesting than most of his output" [J. Williamson in *Wonder's Child*], one thing shows clearly in Hamilton's Captain Future novels. The author was ill at ease with and detached from the subject of love-matters. For example, even if Curt Newton quietly, secretly, loves Joan, he remains distant and somehow afraid of his feelings of love for her. True it is that pulp heroes were not the James Bond type but I think Hamilton himself was a bit circumspect about love matters. I see Hamilton's uneasiness in Williamson's word about them both.

"I think Ed and I were equally ignorant and apprehensive of sex. We seldom talked about women, but he saw them as predators, marriage as a trap into some dull job that would threaten his chosen lifestyle – he hadn't yet met Leigh Brackett." This was in 1931 but Hamilton doesn't seem to have changed much over the years preceding his work on the Captain Future stories.

A striking example can be found in Hamilton's novel *Doom over Venus* published in *Thrilling Wonder Stories* in February 1940. This is not a Captain Future story but it is considered a feeler for the series.

At the end of the novel, the hero turns his back to adventure in order to get married. Explicitly, his friend, "shaking his head dismally," mourns that "there goes one of the best interplanetary spies that [he] ever worked with or against. Heading right for marriage and a dull, respectable home-life. It's a pity – a terrible pity."

Hamilton's evolution came after his marriage with Leigh Brackett. "His later fiction shows far more care with mood and style and character" [J. Williamson in *Wonder's Child*], as we can see for example, in the Captain Future novelet *The Harpers of Titan*, or in other short stories collected in *The Best of Edmond Hamilton* and *What's It Like Out There*.

However, and whatever may have been Hamilton's point of view on marriage "the stories he wrote were strongly plotted and action packed, hammered out at white heat and never revised. Such pulp stuff wasn't literature nor was it meant to be." [J. Williamson in *Wonder's Child*] and the Captain Future novels weren't literature.

Hamilton himself testified that "so little was paid me for the early Captain Future novels that they were all written first draft right out of the typewriter. After the first five or six, they paid me more, and I then did two drafts and they improved a bit." And it is true that they improved. Issues 7 through 13 of the *Captain Future* magazine featured the best novels of the series.

PARDON HIS IRON NERVES

Paraphrasing the title of the Captain Future novelet *Pardon my Iron Nerves*, I titled this essay "Pardon his Iron Nerves", because when I learned about popular fiction and the history of the pulp magazines, I realized that Edmond Hamilton had written stories that were ordered from him by an editor. And so I could at last understand why Captain Future, the supreme foe of all evildoers of the Solar System, relied so much on his strong will and iron nerves

I owe very much to Hamilton. Especially, as John Clute says, "Edmond Hamilton took space opera seriously enough to do it well." And for that, may he be thanked.

4. "The Youth Makers" by Howard Hopkins:

Eternal youth: though many have dreamed of catching this elusive butterfly, their dream, in every case, has been fruitless, evasive. Ponce De Leon scoured Florida in quest of this dream, but went to his grave with empty

hands. He had grasped at a legend and like a sea mist it had slipped through his fingers, dissolving into nothingness in the morning sunlight.

But such is the stuff of dreams.

Many of the great pulp heroes had adventures involving this intangible dream. The Phantom Detective met up with it in *THE SINISTER HAND OF SATAN*, in which glands brought back lost youth.

In *FEAR CAY*, Doc Savage fought the "Fountain of Youth Gang," a band of criminals seeking to snatch a mysterious package that contained a strange weed thought to prolong life. The chase led Doc to a terror-ridden island off the Florida coast where the weed, *Slyphium*, grew. Perhaps this was the answer De Leon sought, but never found. But just as well he never did find it, for he had wasted his lifetime searching for something that was merely a strong medicinal herb.

Even when holding it, youth can sometimes be unclutchable.

Another of Doc's adventures worked this premise: This time the Fountain lay deep in the Arkansas bayou, its secret protected by the ghastly *Crimson Serpent*. If you reached for this one, it bit off your hand.

Doc penetrates the swamp only to find the Fountain of Youth is a hoax, a front for a band of counterfeiterers. The *Serpent*? Why, nothing more than clever, if old fashioned, iron-maiden device.

In all his amazing exploits, Doc Savage may never have found the Fountain of Youth; but his space-sailing clone did.

All through antiquity, men have searched the world over for this fountain of eternal youth; but therein lay their mistake. For they never searched other worlds for the secret (space travel being rather limited in those days) – at least until the time of Captain Future, defender of the Solar System and its peoples and all that good stuff.

THE TRIUMPH OF CAPTAIN FUTURE begins as Curt Newton and his fellow space pals, the amazing Futuremen, attempt to explore a comet. While doing so, minding their own beeswax for a change, they spot a flare blazing from the North Pole on Earth. Immediately, they abandon their scientific exploration and jaunt back to Earth. Their sleek teardrop-shaped spaceship, *The Comet*, slices through the skyways and we're off on another rip-roaring adventure.

The President tells the Futuremen of the evil personage known as the *Lifelord*, who has apparently gotten hold of a milky-looking elixir dubbed "Lifewater." Lifewater can reverse the aging process and give its ingestor eternal life. Sort of. This *Lifelord*, being the evil kind of guy that he is, has been selling this liquid throughout the Solar System for extravagant sums. Lifewater, as you may have guessed, has one teensy-weensy drawback: once deprived of the liquid, the un-

fortunate person ages rapidly and croaks. The police warn the people, but the *Lifelord* tells them it's only a ploy to stop the population from exploding. It isn't.

Captain Future seems thwarted at every turn, sitting on his blasters until he finds a clue in the mysterious *Machine City* on Mars, which, of course, leads him to the glorious ringed planet, Saturn. Saturn looms like a milky topaz against the star-studded void of space as the *Comet* makes its approach. Captain Future must venture where no man has gone before – and lived, that is – the *Saturnian Mistlands*. Pretty suspenseful stuff, all right. Shortly into the *Mistlands*, however, he discovers the reason no one (well, almost no one) ever comes out.

A race of bald, white-winged people grab him, as they have a goodly number of other people who've braved the *Mistland*. Still more captives live in the center city where the Fountain is located. They can never leave. Well, technically they can, but they'd age rapidly and die, so that's a fairly strong deterrent. The winged race can't get into the damn place either; if they enter the "sinful" city, they are blasted to smithereens by the eternally young people who live there. The *Lifelord*, upon discovering the Fountain there, has been exchanging weapons with them for *Lifewater*.

Good old Cap Future in the meantime has formed an allegiance with the winged people. The *Lifewater*, Captain Future discovers, is nothing more than a radioactive compound and he soon devises a way to destroy it. In the explosive ending, the *Lifelord* is killed and the Fountain forever quelled. Simon Wright, the living brain, analyzes the elixir and finds a cure, but the people will return to their normal ages (which, by the way, doesn't do a whole lot for the people who've been living there for centuries).

Phew!

But, at last, the ever mysterious Fountain of Youth, the gilded elixir of antiquity, has been found – and just as quickly lost. Captain Future has saved the Solar System again, but he has thrown water on a fiery dream. He's always spoiling things, but such is the life of a space adventurer.

Perhaps, however, he has raised again the question Ponce De Leon never bothered to ask: What if humans are not supposed to live eternally young?

Makes you think, doesn't it?

(In writing this article, I'd like to wish Tom and *Echoes* a very happy 50th issue and a toast for many, many more. Cheers! Tom. And keep up the good work. Howard Hopkins)

5. "Planets in Peril: Featuring Captain Future" by Jerry Page:



"Planets in Peril" is the 12th adventure of "*CAPTAIN FUTURE*" falling between "The Comet Kings" and "The Face of the Deep" in the Fall 1942 issue of *CAPTAIN FUTURE*. It was written, as were all but three of the Capt. Future yarns, by Edmond Hamilton, and published under his name.

Captain Future was Curt Newton who lived in an isolated base on the far side of the Moon with his sidekicks, the Futuremen. They consisted of Grag, the robot, Otho, the android ("Android" was the term, created I believe by Jack Williamson, for artificial man, biologically produced rather than mechanically produced like a robot; the terms have become confused in recent years because George Lucas, when he wrote his movie *STAR WARS*, did not understand them.), and Simon Wright, the Living Brain. Wright, a human scientist and friend of Captain Future's father, had his brain transplanted into a box where it was kept alive long after the death of his body.

This small group, often accompanied by Earth Government secret agent Joan Randall, was the future's version of Doc Savage – although there were significant differences. In a series of novels and novelettes, published in both *CAPTAIN FUTURE* and, after the demise of that magazine, *STARTLING STORIES*, they adventured on almost every planet and moon of the Solar System –

and quite a few outside. "Planets in Peril" takes us not just outside the Solar System, but to another universe altogether.

Called to the Martian moon Deimos, Cap and his pals learn that scientist Tiko Thrin has managed to contact another universe. But there's a problem there. The local humans are dying out, under attack of a group of mutants who've managed to conquer almost the entire universe. Now they're poised to wipe out humanity – and some human politicians are ready to accept surrender terms that will mean the sterilization of the entire human race. How can even Captain Future help combat these odds? By impersonating a fabled hero of the past, a legendary figure who, it is believed, will reappear when he's needed. All that's known about him is that he has red hair and that he was one of the pioneers of human expansion into the Galaxy.

Future, of course, is reluctant to impersonate anyone but he realizes that although he will be telling a lie, the purpose to the lie is the safety of the entire human race in that universe. He agrees.

Hamilton had first gone "Outside the Universe," in a four-part serial of that title in *Weird Tales* beginning July 1929. It was the fourth story in his "Interstellar Patrol" series, and excited the interest of A. Merritt, who sent WT a famous letter, praising it highly. The universes referred to in the title are island universes, an early name that for a time was used interchangeably with 'galaxy.' The Interstellar Patrol, in that novel, encounter invaders from a dying galaxy who intend to wipe out all life in our galaxy and move in. It's slow moving but readable, and might be found in Ace Books edition (F-271) if you look in the right places. Its similarities to "Planets in Peril" are interesting, though the novels are by no means genuinely similar.

CAPTAIN FUTURE appears to have been the brainchild of Leo Margulies, editorial director of Standard Magazines – more familiarly known as the Thrilling Magazines for the cover slogan "A Thrilling Publication" that identified their magazines. Supposedly the *CAPTAIN FUTURE* idea came about at the First World Science Fiction Convention in 1939, though this might well be nothing more than hype. Ed Hamilton, the old world wrecker himself, who had by then written more space opera than any other writer – and who was probably the best straight out idea man in the history of the field – was a natural choice to write the series, which called for exciting, action-packed adventures in colorful locales, with a strongly imagined foundation.

Also supposedly, the original idea was a character called Doctor Future, an inventor who would fight evil with science. Ed Hamilton agreed to write the series but began arguing for changes from the start.

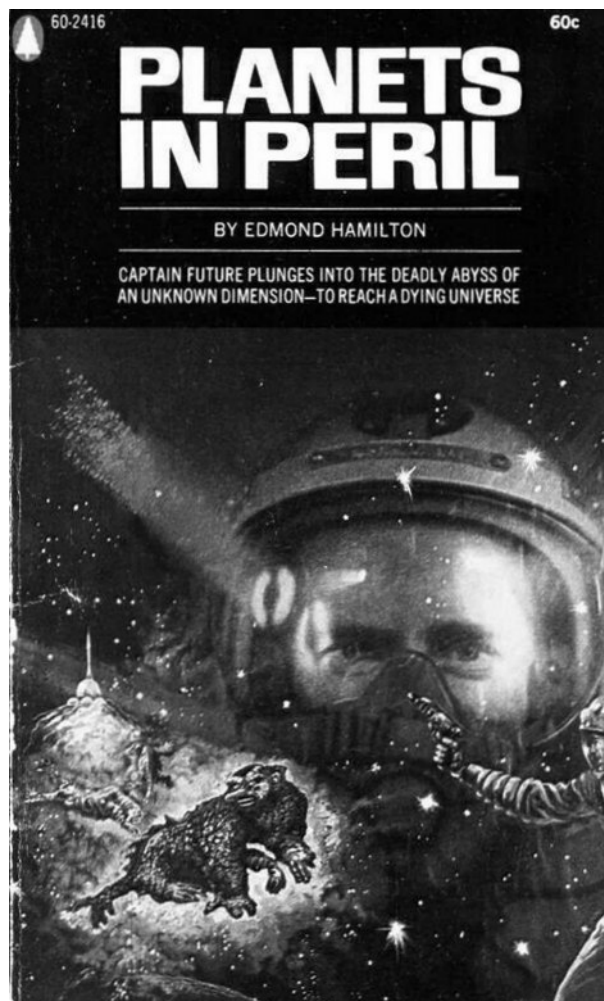
He appears to have gotten his way on most of them but he was still forced to make the series more juvenile than he liked. Over the years he overcame that handicap, and the truth is most of his stories, though kept reasonably simple, are still pretty good sf. "Planets in Peril," for example, has an ending that manages to turn the novel's basic concept on its ear. Like I said, Hamilton was *the* idea man in the history of science fiction.

The payment for these novels was pretty low, so Hamilton had to continue working on other, better paying stories. By day he'd write for his major markets and then in the evening, he'd turn to Cap Future. He'd write a chapter a night, according to an interview he gave back in the 60s. It probably helped that the magazine was quarterly, but as "Planets in Peril" only has twenty chapters, he likely could have maintained a monthly schedule. What interfered with the magazine was World War II.

Hamilton left to join the military and other writers were hired to write *CAPTAIN FUTURE*, "Worlds to Come" and "Days of Creation," both were written by Joseph Samachson under the pen name Brett Sterling. The magazine folded, possibly because of paper shortages caused by the war, and the Captain Future novels continued in *STARTLING STORIES*. There were three novels in **Startling** in 1945 and 1946, two of them by Hamilton and the other one by Manly Wade Wellman.

"Planets in Peril" was reprinted in paperback by Popular Library as #60-2416 sometime in the late 60s or early 70s. The story moves quite well and most of the characters are well represented. Even Joan Randall, who gets left behind, has some nice scenes early in the story. The exception is Otho who clearly takes a back seat to Grag in this novel.

The End



POPULAR LIBRARY paperback version
cover artist unknown

About the artist: Leo Morey

Morey became the cover illustrator for *AMAZING STORIES* shortly after it changed hands in 1929 and painted 77 covers and many interior illustrations for the magazine. He painted covers for *AMAZING STORIES QUARTERLY*, *COSMIC STORIES*, *THRILLING WONDER STORIES*, *FANTASTIC ADVENTURES*, *SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY*, and others. Born in Peru to a well-to-do family, he came to the US for his education, graduated from Louisiana State University with a degree in engineering and did some work in New Orleans before entering sf illustration. He died in 1965.

Source: "The Science Fiction Encyclopedia" edited by Peter Nicholls