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JOHN W. CAMPBELL · EDITOR · ASTOUNDING SCIENCE-FICTION

March 11, 1940

Dr. Richard W. Dodson
Johns Hopkins University
Baltimore, Md.

Dear Dr. Dodson:

I noticed in Science Fiction Weekly that you are a member of the Baltimore Science-Fiction group; presumeably, then, you're acquainted with Astounding Science-Fiction. In the April Astounding, there's an editorial coming asking to hear from practicing technologists and scientists whocould write some articles for the magazine.

Please consider this a personal, advance invitation.

I'm not satisfied with the articles I've been getting, and I'm trying to do what I can to get better ones. I feel that there is a real need for articles directed to those "technical laymen" who, in their study of their specialties, are doing as a microchemist friend of mine claims to be doing; learning more and more about less and less. A physicist who knows the difference between a hormone and an enzyme is as rare as a biochemist who knows a space charge from a grid potential. Neither can read the other man's technical literature--and neither knows or understands the hopes and tribulations of the other.

It's seemed to me that the fun in science is finding a particularly wicked impossibility and licking it--like the solution to the problem of the absolute black body. I'd like a series of articles on various sciences giving--in an informal, "bull-session" manner--some understanding of each science as it now stands. It's hypothesis stage at present-- what the present problems are, how they arise, what methods for licking them have been suggested and why they didn't work, what methods remain, what's hoped for if the problem can be licked.

Since the statement of a problem requires a review of the factors giving rise to it, such an article would constitute a rapid summary of advances to date, with concentration on the present problems. Puzzle books excepted, a problem exists

Dr. Richard W. Dodson - #2

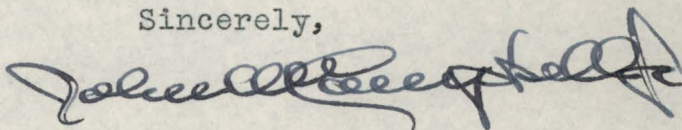
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only because there's a reason for solving it; hence the hopes and beliefs as to future possibilities of the science in question will appear in the material.

If either you yourself, or some other member of the Johns Hopkins staff whom you know would be interested, I'd like very much to hear from you. If you could send an outline of a suggested article, I'd be glad to give any suggestions and reactions I can.

We're paying \$50 to \$60 for 5,000 word articles--about 18 or 19 typed, double-spaced pages of the usual size.

Sincerely,



JOHN W. CAMPBELL, JR.
Editor.

JWC:T