

April 14, 1940

Mr. John W. Campbell, Jr., Editor
Astounding Science-Fiction
Street and Smith Publications
79 Seventh Avenue
New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Campbell:

I am sorry not to have answered your letter of March 11 before now. In reply to your very kind invitation to write an article for Astounding I must say that I am too busy with research to think of doing one for several months, at least. I might be interested in trying my hand at one a little later. If I did, it would probably be some phase of the field of 'atom-smashing'. I am at present working on uranium and thorium fission products, and also on the use of artificially produced radioactive substances as tracers in the study of various chemical reactions. If there is any topic along these lines which would be of especial interest to you, I should be glad to hear of it.

I am not actually a member of the local Science-Fiction group, although I have spent some pleasant evenings with them. Your surmise that I am acquainted with Astounding is, of course, quite correct. For a long time I have been admiring the splendid job you have been doing as editor of Astounding, and of Unknown. I consider your achievement truly remarkable, and should like to congratulate you on it. Frankly, I consider these two magazines the only ones worth buying in the fantasy field, except for the reprint magazine, which I also enjoy well enough to add to my permanent collection. Like many others I regret your withdrawal, as an author, from the field, and hope that it will not be permanent.

Since I have been a 'fan' from the good old days of 1926 on, I read most of your early stories, and on one occasion actually wrote you a letter with a request for an autograph. After my letter had 'tracked you down like a pursuing demon' through many changes of address, you replied very graciously. I was interested in your description of student life at MIT, because I was soon to go to Caltech, where I did my undergraduate work. And by the way, it gave me considerable satisfaction to find that one of your best authors, de Camp, also hails from that alma mater.

Before closing this letter, I'd like to tell you that I enjoyed Smith's Gray Lensman to a superlative degree. I count 'Doc' both as a personal friend and as an exceptionally able spinner of tales. I await another Lensman yarn with high

anticipations, but also with some fear that he will try too hard to outdo himself. If he can go on with the extended characterization and philosophical content which distinguished Gray Lensman, however, I expect the miracle to happen.

With best wishes for your continued editorial success,

Sincerely yours,

Richard Dodson

P. S. It is probably unnecessary for me to say that this is a letter to you, and not to the discussions columns of Astounding.