

Auburn, Calif.
March 16th, 1933.

Dear Richard Dodson:

Here is that drawing for The Hashish-Eater-- somewhat faded with time, for it was done in 1919 or thereabouts. A line on the back gives the reference--"The sacred flower with lips of purple flesh/And silverlashed, vermilion-lidded eyes/Of torpid azure." I am enclosing also two ancient grotesques, even older. Hope they will divert you. The green creature is probably some Lemurian beastie.

I'm glad the poems continue to grow upon you, and hope that The Star-Treader won't be a disappointment when you get it. Robertson is about as individual as his writing--a sort of Scottish gnome, and deader than granite. But he knows the book business.

I have begun a long story, The Infernal Star, and have written about enough of it for a magazine instalment. I hope to go on with it later, alternating the composition with shorts and novellettes. I have recently sold to Wright two longish ^{short} stories, 10,000 words each, Vulthoom (a Martian fantasy) and The Dark Eidolon (the last being part of my myth-cycle dealing with the future and last continent, Zothique, which corresponds somewhat to the Pushkara of occult tradition or prophecy. I think I told you, on a card, that Dweller in Martian Depths (Oi, what a title--Gernsback, not I, is guilty) had been mangled in publication. In my version, The dweller corralled all three of the earthmen. I suppose they wanted to tone down the horror--but the changes, even at that, were senseless and deplorable; and the tale, in its original form, was far from bad. My title was The Dweller in the Gulf; but Gernsback seems to have a sort of mania for changing titles--nearly always for the worse.

Re the matter of religion. From a purely scientific standpoint, it might interest you to examine the occult or so-called Theosophic doctrines. I hold no brief for them; but a perfectly amazing system of material and spiritual evolution seems to have been worked out by the adepts. For a clear logical exposition of it, I recommend Esoteric Buddhism, by A.P. Sinnett, which puts the doctrine of Karma almost in terms of chemistry. Or if you haven't time to hunt up, and read this book, refer to the article on Theosophy in the Encyclopedia Americana. In perusing this article the other day, I made the astounding discovery that the existence of Pluto was known to adepts long before its discovery by the telescope! And they also knew of the 10th planet, now widely postulated by astronomers! The edition in which I found this was published at least 20 years ago. The lore that they profess to have preserved about the lost continents is fascinating, too. They even give dates--the destruction of Atlantis began about 850,000 years ago, and the last remnant, the island Poseidonis, the Atlantis of Greek and Egyptian legend, sank with a crash 10,000 years B.C. All this is learned from the Akashic records, permanent pictures of everything that has ever happened, which exist in the ether, and to which the adept has access by the development of supra-normal faculties.

Whatever one may think of all this, it is certainly fascinating.

Best regards, as ever,

Clark Ashton Smith