

Auburn, Calif.,  
May 25th, 1933.

My dear Richard:

I had meant to answer your last letter long before this, but have been trying to do the work of about three men, so much of my correspondence has had to wait.

Among other time-devouring enterprises, I have been trying to issue a pamphlet of hitherto-unpublished stories; but the printing, done in a short-handed country office, has been endlessly delayed. I hope it will be ready before long, however. I enclose a prospectus, which you might show to anyone who would be interested. else

Re some of the things in your letter: I cannot say that I believe in esoteric Buddhism or any other ism. It is all very interesting; and I do not doubt that mystics in many lands and ages have obtained a glimpse of something behind the veil. What I do question, however, is their interpretation of their visions, which, it seems to me, would inevitably be shaped and coloured by the personality and ethic prepossessions of the visionary. The infinite, translated into terms of the finite, is pretty sure to become distorted. No, I have never read the Vicarion. It sounds interesting. There was a story in a recent issue of Wonder Stories--The Third Vibrator-- which suggested familiarity with the occult records of Mu and Atlantis.

I am glad you liked The Visitors from Mlok. This title, by the way, was foisted on the story by Gernsback--the correct title was A Star-Change. Yes, I have dealt largely with the possibility of an extension of experience beyond the merely mundane. This, to me, is a very fascinating idea; but I do not think that the psychology behind it, in my case, is primarily one of "escape." It is rather an aspiration toward the infinite, a desire to explore the unknown. As to terms like "introvert" and "extrovert," and the rest of the current pseudo-psychological patter, I must say that I doubt seriously if they mean very much. Perhaps the Freudians are introverts; but I do not think the term can be applied to those who are genuinely interested in the cosmos rather than in the human intestines.

The Infernal Star is still unfinished. I hardly know how to describe the tale--it is a weird mixture of occultism and modern science. The hero, a harmless bibliophile, becomes a sorcerer through the chance possession of a strange amulet from an alien world, which stimulates in him the memories and potentialities of those monads of his being which had previously been incarnated in witches, wizards, alchemists, etc. He is transported to a world which is, so to speak, the home planet of cosmic evil, and the center of all the sorcery in the universe. In, the end, he is cast out and returned to his former condition by the supermen of this world, because of some momentary weakness due to the ordinary human elements in his nature.

Since my tastes run primarily to the fantastic, I do not think that I like so well the type of story that depends mainly on suppositional science. However, I'd rather read this sort--exemplified by John Campbell, Jr., etc., than the ordinary kinds of magazine or book fiction. I admire Stanton Coblenz greatly for his excellent writing and clever satire.

I'm glad you liked the drawings. Thanks for the thumb-nail snap of yourself. You look bright and amiable. I'm sorry I haven't any snaps of myself on hand, or I'd return the favour.

I have been making a selection from my volumes of verse (about a hundred poems in all) which will be submitted to British publishers some time in the autumn. Cross your fingers for its success! Also, I may get together enough of my best stories for a volume, and try them around on book publishers.

The Isle of the Torturers (from W.T.) has been selected for inclusion in a British anthology of weirds--Not at Night. The publishers, Selwyn and Blount, issue one every year, I believe.

Have you read The Purple Cloud, by M.P. Shiel? If by any chance you haven't, I recommend it unreservedly as one of the best fantastic stories ever written. The Worm Ouroboros, by E.R. ~~Edison~~ Eddison, is another.

Yours cordially,

*Clark Ashton Smith*