

Howard Phillips Lovecraft as

Her Memoirs of the Providence Writer of Horror Stories Now First Published

By SONIA H. DAVIS

(the former Mrs. H. P. Lovecraft)

HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT and I met in 1921 and we were married at New York in March 1924. What follows here may to all intents and purposes be called the true story of his private life. It differs somewhat from that given by most of his biographers.

For instance, I have recently read the late W. Paul Cook's "In Memoriam: Howard Phillips Lovecraft." As far as it goes it is a very interesting and worthy eulogy of a truly great person. But it contains—as do other accounts—several misconceptions about Howard's life, and especially of events in the years 1921-1932 of which no one but myself knows.

Of various early incidents in his life, not generally repeated to others, Howard himself told me. Of other incidents I speak from my own experience while still his wife; some of these are of a very personal nature.

First Meeting

I first met Howard Lovecraft at a Boston convention of the Amateur Journalists. I admired his personality but, frankly, at first not his person.

As he was always trying to find recruits for Amateur Journalism, he offered to send me samples of work—his own and others'—which appeared in the different amateur journals: non-paying little papers and magazines, privately printed and circulated. From then on we kept up quite a steady correspondence, and I felt highly flattered when he told me in some of his letters that mine indicated a freshness not born of immaturity but rather a "re-freshingness" because of the originality and courage of my convictions when I disagreed with him.

I disagreed often, not just to be disagreeable: if possible I wanted to remove some of Howard's intensely fixed ideas.

During many months of correspondence H. P. mentioned the names of several writer-friends, many of whom he knew through letters only. One of these whom he particularly lauded was Samuel Loveman of Cleveland, Ohio. "Samuelus," Howard called him—he was always romanizing names of his friends. Howard had a great regard for Loveman and used him

Bookman's Galley

IN THE accompanying article the woman who was once Howard Lovecraft's wife emerges from silence, even from considerable mystery as to her whereabouts, and for the first time speaks out. In the field of Lovecraftiana, it is an article of the very first importance. Nevertheless it is not designed to stand quite self-sufficiently, and so I want to make Bookman's Galley today a brief Foreword.

Lovecraft was born here in Providence 58 years ago this August 20 just past. He died here in March, 1937. Boy and man he was an over-mothered, over-protected, somewhat neurotic, shy and brilliant eccentric. His weird tales of the supernatural brought him little notice in his lifetime, but in recent years Lovecraft's fame has become international.

This has been due to three developments. First, of course, the publication of Lovecraft's stories in two huge collections by August Derleth's Arkham House: "The Outsider" and "Beyond the Wall of Sleep." Second, a simultaneous spurt of writing about Lovecraft, himself a strange and fascinating personality. And third, a general increase of reader interest in the weird, or horror, story.

Paper-book selections of his work, reprints of stories in many anthologies, residual publication of Lovecraft material, promise of his "Letters" yet to come from Arkham House: these have filled out the posthumous reputation. Collectors have paid between \$50 and \$100 for a copy of "The Outsider"—that highest price being, as Anglophilic H. P. L. would delight to know, in England.

For general Lovecraft biography, any unfamiliar reader may refer to Derleth's little book, "H. P. L.: A Memoir,"



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(A recent photograph)

his desire to leave Providence and settle in New York. Each of us meditated the possibilities of a life together. Some of our friends suspected. I admitted to friends that I cared very much for Howard and that if he would have me I would gladly be his wife. But nothing definite was decided.

I came to America when I was nine years old, a White Russian of the old Czarist regime. In 1899, when I was 16, I married a fellow-countryman who had adopted the name of a Boston friend, Greene. My husband died in 1916. By him I have one daughter who was for several years Paris correspondent for various American newspapers. After my divorce from Howard Lovecraft I married Nathaniel A.

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Houdini Manuscript

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Other Friends

When one of my business trips took me to Cleveland for the first time, I indeed found Samuel Loveman to be all the things H. P. had said about him. And at the end of my day's work there, Loveman surprised me by calling together, at a moment's notice almost, a meeting of all the available Cleveland amateur journalists.

At the end of a very pleasant evening we all signed our names to a Cleveland postcard and sent it to Howard, and when I wrote him later I deplored the fact he too could not have been with us. I said his presence would have made my happiness complete for that evening. His reply, though bountifully mixed with reservations, was quite warm and appreciative—coming from him.

New York Visit

So now I had two correspondents: Lovecraft and Loveman. I decided to invite them both to New York, to meet at last, and to spend Christmas and New Years. I turned my Parkside Avenue apartment over to them. A neighbor gave me sleeping space in hers. And evenings the two men would meet me and we would go to dinner and see a play, or sometimes have a conclave of "amateur" friends—James F. Morton Jr. (who had introduced me to Lovecraft), Frank Belknap Long, Rheinhardt Kleiner and others.

Never having done such a thing before, I was somewhat amazed at myself—inviting two men at my expense to be my guests. I had one excellent reason having to do with Howard's race prejudices of which I shall speak later on.

I remember one evening we went to a fashionable Italian restaurant. It was the first time Howard had ever been in an Italian restaurant. (he was then in his early thirties), the first time he had ever eaten Minestrone or spaghetti with meat and tomato sauce and Parmesan cheese. He balked at wine. He said he never had tasted any alcohol and didn't wish to begin now.

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Now, as to Sonia Davis' personal memoir. It is precisely that. It is her version. Perhaps—I do not know—it will not prove unassailable in every point. Certainly it corrects much that has been written about Lovecraft. It further and consistently enriches what we already know of his personality. It offers new material on his family and financial affairs. Above all it tells the story of his marriage of which until now little has been known beyond the astonishing fact that so difficult a person did marry.

Long ago I said in print that if the one-time Mrs. Lovecraft could be discovered and persuaded to tell her story it would be of inestimable value. Now at last this has happened. And we have here, I think, not only the expected valuable addition to Lovecraft biography but a story which is in itself unexpectedly moving. W. T. S.

His very plain face he attributed, he said, to two reasons. At 15 or 16 he fell and broke his nose when he and another boy were racing their bicycles. The other reason, he said wryly, was that nightly he would look up at the stars through his telescope. Actually, he resembled his mother very much. Though less pronounced in the womenfolk, the entire Phillips family had the prognathous jaw and the extremely short upper lip. Howard was fond of making caricatures of himself as he would appear when he became old.

Well—to return to Howard with the Persian cat—I felt that if he could be made to feel more confident of his genius as a writer and to forget his "awful looks," as he put it, he would become less diffident and more happy. So whenever an opportunity presented itself I would not avoid giving him compliments.

When Howard, still in New York, went out with "the boys" for several evenings I realized how poignantly I missed him. I suggested that instead of his going home to Providence, we bring "Providence" to Parkside Avenue. Each of us wrote an urgent invitation to the aunts with whom he lived, Mrs. Lillian Clark and Mrs. Annie Gamwell and Mrs. Gamwell

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At the time of my meeting Howard Lovecraft I held an executive position with a fashionable women's wear establishment on Fifth Avenue. My salary was close to \$10,000 a year.

More Meetings

On my business trips to Boston I would stop off at Providence and the aunts and Howard would dine with me at the Biltmore. They all enjoyed these occasions, but they thought me extravagant. The aunts would not join me in Boston but they condescended to trust Howard alone with me there. I would attend to business during the daytime, while Howard explored museums, graveyards, old houses and whatnot. At least once on each visit we would have our dinner at a Greek restaurant which H. P. favored for its tiled walls depicting scenes from Greek classics. He loved to talk to me of ancient Greece and Rome while I, in turn, considered it a great privilege after a hard day's work to listen to him. Later he would show me the historical places in Boston and we would walk the old, narrow streets.

Once we visited Magnolia, Mass. As we walked along the esplanade there one evening we heard a peculiar snorting, grunting noise, loud in the distance. The moon made a path on the water. Emergent tops of piles in the water were connected with rope, like a huge spider web.

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I read them slowly to him while he pounded at a typewriter borrowed from the hotel in Philadelphia where we were spending our first day and night. So we spent them, and when the manuscript was finished we were too tired and exhausted for honeymooning or anything else. But I wouldn't let Howard down, and the manuscript reached the publisher in time.

The only money Howard ever spent on me which he had earned was what he had received for that article. When I insisted only half the amount be used for a wedding-ring, he insisted the future Mrs. Howard Phillips Lovecraft must have the finest, with diamonds all around it, even if it took all the proceeds of that first well-paid story.

I called him a dear, generous spendthrift. He said there would be more where that came from—which, alas, did not materialize except in stipends when he sold a story (not too often) to *Weird Tales* magazine.

When we were married he was gaunt and hungry-looking, too much so even for my taste. I used to cook a well-balanced meal every evening, make a substantial breakfast (he loved cheese souffle for breakfast!), and I'd leave a few (almost Dagwoodian) sandwiches, cake and fruit for his lunch.

Sometimes he would meet me after my day's work; we would dine out and go to a theater. He had no conception of time. Even in bitter wintry weather I often had to wait in some lobby or at some street corner from three-quarters of an hour to an hour and a half. He was always late for an appointment, whether it was with me or anyone else.

H. P. L. and Mummies

Here I must record an extraordinary story about this master of weird stories. Howard was allergic to the spices of the mummified corpses at the Metropolitan Museum. Near them, his hands and wrists became swollen. Sometime after we had left the Museum the swelling went down and we thought no more of it. But about a week later we returned to see and study as much as we could of Tut-ahn-ka-men's tomb, and again Howard's wrists and hands began to swell. I urged him to consult a doctor, but Howard laughed it off and refused. He never wanted to have a doctor, no matter how ill he was.

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Half in earnest, half joking, I said "What a lot of perfectly good affection to waste on a mere cat—when a woman might highly appreciate it!"

He said, "How can any woman love a face like mine?"

"A mother can," I replied, "and some who are not mothers would not have to try very hard." We all laughed and Howard went on stroking the cat.

Howard's voice was clear and resonant when he read. It became thin and high-pitched in conversation, somewhat falsetto. His singing voice, though not strong, was very sweet. He would sing none of the modern songs—only the more favored old ones.

Howard's mother had hoped her child would be a girl, and as a baby he looked like a beautiful little girl. A photograph shows him with a mass of flaxen curls which he wore until he was about six. When at last he protested, his mother took him to the barber's where she cried bitterly as he was shorn. (These curls were kept: Howard once showed them to me.)

Once when we were looking at an early photograph of him, he exclaimed, "And look at me now!"

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Return to Providence

After their return to Providence I was not ashamed to write him how very much I missed him. His appreciation of this led us both to more serious ground.

I knew Howard was not in a position to marry. Of his Grandfather Phillips' estate there was only about \$20,000 left, and that was supposed to last the rest of the lives of his two aunts and himself. Had he been less proud to write for money he need not have starved himself. He would say "I write to please myself only; and if a few of my friends enjoy my 'effusions' I feel well repaid."

He spent much of his time revising the atrocious work of others, for which he was paid a pittance. He would wear himself out over some of the stupid trash he was asked to revise, some of it for authors who later became well known and prosperous.

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It was after that vacation in Magnolia that our more intimate correspondence began which led to our marriage. H. P. wrote me of everything he did, everywhere he went: sometimes filling 30, 40, even 50 pages with his fine writing. There were two years of almost daily correspondence. Then he decided to break away from Providence.

Early in March 1924, Howard came to New York. I had asked him to tell his aunts he was going to marry me, but he said he preferred to surprise them. In the matter of details—securing the license, buying the ring, etc.—he seemed to be jovial. He said one would think he was being married for the 'nth time, he went about it in such a methodical way.

The man at the marriage bureau thought I was the younger. I was 7 years Howard's senior, and he said nothing could please him better: that Sarah Helen Whitman was older than Poe, and that Poe might have met with better fortune had he married her.

I thought a civil marriage would be sufficient, but Howard insisted

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But, anyway, during our life at Parkside Avenue he became quite stout, and he looked and felt marvelous. He really became a more interesting human being. I think he half-starved himself before he knew me, and probably starved once more after we separated permanently.

I criticized his ten-year-old overcoat and insisted on buying him a new coat, suit, hat, gloves, and even a billfold; (I didn't like the tiny, old-fashioned pocketbook he would unsnap to take out change). Looking at himself in the mirror he protested: "But, my dear, this is entirely too stylish for 'Grandpa Theobald,' it doesn't look like me. I look like some fashionable fop!" And I really think he was glad when the new suit and coat were later stolen; he had the old ones to resume.

And Money

Before our marriage I tried to contribute to his ease and comfort by sending him the stamps for his voluminous correspondence, and by gifts of money at birthday and

His Wife Remembers Him

Woman Who Knew Him Best Tells of Their Strange Marriage and Difficult Years



H. P. Lovecraft

holiday times. If at any time he lacked money I did not know it, and while he was my husband I saw to it that he was supplied out of my earnings. His aunts, out of his own share of the Phillips estate, were supposed to send him \$15 a week; but while I provided for him they sent only \$5 and that not always regularly.

I told Howard they need not send him anything if they found it difficult, that some day he would earn more than I. In jest I used to say "You'll pay it all back with interest, I'm sure." And we'd both laugh about it. Often he would spend much of the money on books, for me or for some of his friends; and he sometimes gave them money. Two of the amateur brotherhood wrote him the letters of gentle grafters and he would go without things himself in order to aid them. No one knew of this save myself and his beneficiaries.

I effaced my own interests and deferred to him upon all matters and domestic problems regardless of what they were. Even to the spending of money I not only consulted him but tried to make him feel that he was the head of the house.

In Brooklyn Alone

I soon found it necessary to accept an exceedingly well-paid job

mixed crowds which characterize New York, Howard would become livid with rage. He seemed almost to lose his mind. And if the truth must be known, it was this attitude toward minorities and his desire to escape them that eventually prompted him back to Providence.

Soon after our marriage he told me that whenever we had company he would appreciate it if "Aryans" were in the majority. As a matter of fact, I think he hated humanity in the abstract. He once said: "It is more important to know what to hate than it is to know what to love." And he believed it was better to be dead than alive, best of all not to be born. It was good, he thought, to be in that state of oblivion before birth.

"Henry Ryecroft"

A better understanding of Lovecraft may be gained in reading Gissing's "Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft," a book Howard gave me early in the life of our romance. Throughout it elucidates much of Howard's own personality, his attitude toward the masses and toward life in general. Non-religious and anti-democratic, Howard's code was to let his fellowmen alone and mind his own business. As for me, whenever I protested I was one of the "alien hordes," he would say: "You are now Mrs. H. P. Lovecraft of 598 Angell Street, Providence, Rhode Island."

further, to lift him out of his abysmal depths of loneliness and psychic complexes by a true, wedded love. I am afraid my optimism and excessive self-assurance misled us both. (His love of the weird and mysterious, I believe, was born of sheer loneliness.)

I had hoped, in other words, that my embrace would make of him not only a great genius but also a lover and husband. While the genius developed and broke through the chrysalis, the lover and husband receded into the background until they were apparitions that finally vanished.

It has been said—quoting letters of Howard's—that our separation was mainly caused by his lack of money. That is not true. The real reasons my own story makes evident. Marvelous person though he was, it was probably to "save face" that Howard, having to give a reason, offered one that might be most easily believed.

When Howard felt he could no longer tolerate Brooklyn, it was I suggested he return to Providence. He'd say "If I could . . . live in Providence, the blessed city where I was born and reared. I am sure, there, I could be happy." I agreed. I said "I'd love nothing better than to live in Providence if I could do my work there."

Providence Again

Well, he returned, and I followed him much later. Again: it is not true that his aunts "dispatched a truck which brought Howard back to Providence lock, stock and barrel." I made a special trip from out of town to help him pack his things, to see to it all was well before he left, and to pay—his railroad fare and all—out of my own funds.

Eventually we held a conference with the aunts. I suggested I take a large house in Providence, hire a maid, pay the expenses, and we all live together; our family to use one side of the house, I to use the other for a business venture of my own. The aunts gently but firmly informed me that neither they nor Howard could afford to have Howard's wife work for a living in Providence. That was that. I knew then where we all stood.

To be not too far from Providence where I could spend some weekends, I took a new and less well paying job in New York. (The time was now 1927.) But there was a Chicago job too good to refuse, and I knew I could have Howard meet me in New York every few weeks on my buying trips. I hated Chicago, though, and after six months—at Christmas—I decided to try Providence for a short vacation while waiting for something to happen. I didn't know

Howard was perfectly willing and even satisfied to live this way, but not I. I began urging divorce. He tried every method he could devise to persuade me how much he appreciated me: divorce would cause him great unhappiness; a gentleman does not divorce his wife unless he has cause, and he had none.

I told him I had done everything I could think of to make our marriage a success, but that no marriage could be such in letter-writing only.

Howard said he knew of a very happy couple whose marriage was kept intact by letters: the wife living with her parents, and the husband because of his illness living elsewhere.

I replied that neither of us was really sick and I did not wish to be a "long-distance" wife. I told him it was all impossible, that he ought to divorce me and find and marry a young woman of his own background and culture, live in Providence and try to live a happy, normal life.

"No, my dear," he would say, "if you leave me I shall never marry again. You do not realize how much I appreciate you."

"But your way of demonstrating," I would reply, "is so unheard of!"

Divorce

The divorce came in 1929. On a friendly but impersonal basis we occasionally corresponded.

In 1932 I went to Europe. I was almost tempted to invite him along, but I knew he would not accept. However, I wrote him from England, Germany and France, sent him books and pictures of every conceivable thing I thought might interest him. And I sent him a travelogue which he revised for me.

Final Meeting

After my return to the United States I was quite ill. On recuperating, I went to Farmington, Conn. I was so enchanted by the 18th century beauty of it that I wrote Howard at once to join me there, which he did. We explored the town and also Weathersfield.

I believe I still loved Howard very much, more than I cared to admit even to myself. Although in my travels I had met many eligible men and some offering proposals of marriage, for eight years I met none who did not seem inadequate in intellect compared to Howard. When we parted for the night I said, "Howard, won't you kiss me goodnight?" He said "No, it is better not to."

The next day we explored Hartford, and when we parted that night I no longer asked for a kiss.

spending of money I not only consulted him but tried to make him feel that he was the head of the house.

In Brooklyn Alone

I soon found it necessary to accept an exceedingly well-paid job out of town. I wanted Howard to make his home with me there, but he said he would hate to live in a midwestern city, he would prefer to remain in New York where at least he had some friends. I suggested he have one of them come to live with him in our apartment, but his aunts thought it wiser for me to store and sell my furniture and find a studio room large enough for Howard to have the old (and several delapidated) pieces he had brought from Providence. It was then the Clinton Street, Brooklyn, address was decided upon.

I could be in New York only a few days at a time, every three or four weeks. I gave him money each time I came to town and I sent him weekly checks.

Racial Prejudices

He admired the quaintness of that part of Brooklyn, and at first he seemed to love his Clinton Street setup. But the crowds in the subway, streets and parks he hated, and he suffered through that hate. He referred chiefly to Semitic peoples: "beady-eyed, rat-faced Asiatics," he called them. In general, all foreigners were "mongrels."

Long before we were married, Howard wrote me in a letter praising Samuel Loveman that the only "discrepancy" he could find in Loveman was that he was a Jew. I replied in amazement at such discrimination and reminded him—as I did constantly—that I, too, come of Hebrew people. It was his prejudice against minorities, especially Jews, which prompted me to that simultaneous invitation of Howard and Loveman to New York of which I have spoken.

Later H. P. assured me he was quite "cured." But unfortunately, (and here I must speak of something I never intended to have publicly known), whenever we found ourselves in the racially-

anti-democratic, Howard's code was to let his fellowmen alone and mind his own business. As for me, whenever I protested I was one of the "alien hordes," he would say: "You are now Mrs. H. P. Lovecraft of 598 Angell Street, Providence, Rhode Island."

Mr. Cook quotes the line: "I... still refrained from going home to my people lest I seem to crawl back ignobly in defeat." This is only part of the truth. He wanted more than anything else to go back to Providence but he also wanted me to come along. This I could not do because there was no situation in Providence fitting my abilities and needs. And since he was reluctant to return without me, he remained at Clinton Street, whence the foregoing cry.

I believe he loved me as much as it was possible for a temperament like his to love. He'd never mention the word, "love." He would say, "My dear, you don't know how much I appreciate you." I tried to understand him and was grateful for any crumbs from his lips that fell my way.

Our family nicknames of "Socrates" and "Xantippe" were originated by me. I saw in Howard a Socratic wisdom and genius. I had hoped in time to humanize him

there was a Chicago job too good to refuse, and I knew I could have Howard meet me in New York every few weeks on my buying trips. I hated Chicago, though, and after six months—at Christmas—I decided to try Providence for a short vacation while waiting for something to happen. I didn't know what.

Visits and Letters

I spent several weeks there. But I soon needed money, so I returned to New York, rented an apartment, retrieved from storage what was left of my furniture and set up housekeeping by myself. I opened a small millinery shop in the neighborhood.

Our marital life for the next few months was spent on reams of paper in rivers of ink. That spring I invited Howard to visit me and he gladly accepted, as a visitor only. To me, even his nearness was better than nothing. The visit lasted throughout the summer but I saw him only during the early morning hours when he would return from jaunts with Morton, Loveman, Long, Kleiner, some or all of them. Then he visited Vest Orton at Yonkers and returned to Providence in the early fall.

Then we lived in letters again.

26
in intellect compared to Howard. When we parted for the night I said, "Howard, won't you kiss me goodnight?" He said "No, it is better not to."

The next day we explored Hartford, and when we parted that night I no longer asked for a kiss. I had learned my lesson well. I never saw Howard again.

H. P. L.'s Death

Off and on we still corresponded, after I moved to California. Here I soon met and married Dr. Davis. It was here, too, I met Mr. Wheeler Dryden who told me of Howard Lovecraft's death.

I do not believe it an exaggeration to say that Howard had the mind, taste and personality of a much greater artist and genius than that with which he was accredited in his lifetime. He will be I am quite sure a legendary, mysterious figure. The irony is that he died before the rewards and celebrity of his labors occurred. I like to believe that time mellowed him, that he found other men of all sorts to be normal, kindly folk. And even though I am not his widow, I mourn in sorrow and reverence his untimely passing.

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The Providence Journal Co.)

Huxley's Post-Atomic World

APE AND ESSENCE, by Aldous Huxley. 205 pages, Harper. \$2.50.

THE year is 2108—A. D. if you insist, but only in a consistency of time measurement. Now it is Satan who is the god of the half-savage tribes who live in and around the ruins of what was once Los Angeles, the city of the angels. It is long after the Third World War and the almost complete atomic-bomb destruction of civilization.

One of the gelded priests of the new cult sees the path of history clearly:

"Well, what are the facts? The first is the fact of experience and observation—namely that nobody wants to suffer, wants to be degraded, wants to be maimed or killed. The second is a fact of history—that fact that, at a certain epoch, the overwhelming majority of human beings accepted beliefs and adopted courses of action that could not possibly result in anything but universal suffering, general degradation and wholesale destruction. The only plausible explanation is that they were inspired or possessed of an alien consciousness, a consciousness that willed their undoing and willed it more strongly than they were able to will their own happiness and survival."

Huxley has projected from our beginning of an atomic age yet another "Brave New World." He has done this with a weirdness of imagination that makes "Ape and Essence" a Gothic novel of the future. Wellsian-wise, he has shown scientific possibilities to be the supreme source of the horror tale. Or, it is as though "The Waste Land" were given a newer date and translated into actual drama: as though the bitter Jeffers of "The Double Axe" had written a novel to express his disgust with humanity and his conviction of its

worshipping captors and takes with him a girl to whom he has taught individual, responsible, romantic love. In these latter pages quotations from Shelley are set in soaring marvelous counterpoint to the anti-creative, literally damned atmosphere of the main narrative.

It is a frightening book, the more so because it so consistently, in action and symbol, whips to logical conclusion the worst possibilities of present-day society: Its actualities, as Huxley projects them in movie-script form, are chilling. And of course as with all Huxley's work there is an incisive brilliance of intellect—here wedded to macabre imagination. It repays re-reading; if you can stand it, or if you haven't already left for New Zealand.

W. T. S.

LAST OF THE CONQUERORS, by William Gardner Smith. 262 pages, Farrar, Straus. \$2.75.

OUR disinclination in World War II to treat the Negro soldier as anything but a "limited service" navy and the polite intolerances vowed this year by Generals Eisenhower and Bradley show how much our government has refused to learn since Negroes took San Juan Hill, or since the heroic Colonel Shaw was "buried with his niggers." Mr. W. G. Smith, a Negro newspaperman, ex-serviceman and University student, has written a thesis novel about the days when Negro service troops were being shunted out of the ETO—because they had conquerors' privileges, because "cracker" officers resented commanding them, and because some people didn't want their Negro labor supply to become accustomed to even a soldier's pay.

Any enlisted man has learned something of what it means to occupy a Negro's place in society, and some of the injustices visited

personal tragedy. The author indicates how much this view is forced on him by American mores about his color—what other opinions about the Germans might be, for anyone who had ever enjoyed being an American. The style of this tract is straightforward, and Smith has picked among his experiences well to make his record representative and convincing.

J. M.

THE CITY BOY, by Herman Wouk. 306 pages, Simon & Schuster. \$2.95.

THE quality of "The City Boy" merits my reminding you that Mr. Wouk's first novel, "Aurora Dawn," was the most cried-upon Book-of-the-Month selection since "Cradle of the Deep." What the publishers are trying to jam down your throat this time is a wordy attempt at joking about boyhood, summer camps and pre-adolescent love. There is, over and above this, a preposterous plot in which the 11-year-old hero's burglary saves his father's artificial ice business. Mr. Wouk's artificial writing business is saved by nothing, especially not by his nudging us to attention for every antic of his stock "comic kids" characters, or by a pretentious and undistinguished diction—example: "Jacob Bookbinder was not, in the popular phrase, a man to be trifled with."

F. M.

R. I. BEST SELLERS

FICTION: Shannon's Way, The Naked and the Dead: NON-FICTION: How to Stop Worrying and Start Living, Sexual Behavior in the Human Male, Westward Ho, Peace of Mind.

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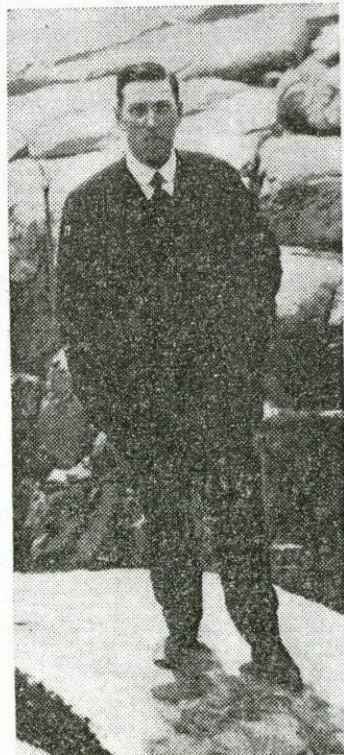
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At Magnolia

(Snapshot of H. P. L. taken by
Mrs. Davis in the early 1920's)

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manity and his conviction of its
ruin.

Or almost Jeffersian. Actually,
Huxley clings still to a belief in
the possible regeneration of man.
In his story the exploring scientist
from New Zealand (which was not
atom-damaged) escapes his Belial-

worshipping captors and takes
with him a girl to whom he has
taught individual, responsible, ro-
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were being shunted out of the ETO
—because they had conquerors'
privileges, because "cracker"
officers resented commanding
them, and because some people
didn't want their Negro labor
supply to become accustomed to
even a soldier's pay.

Any enlisted man has learned
something of what it means to
occupy a Negro's place in society,
and some of the injustices visited
on Mr. Smith's hero are merely
military, not necessarily matters of
color. But the hero of "Last of the
Conquerors" acquires a permanent
German woman and treatment
even from ex-Nazis which makes
his return to the United States a

personal tragedy. The
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R. I. BEST SELLER

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