

The Aether Chronicle

The Imaginary Alternate History of the Steampunk Empire

From Sunday November 23, 2014 to Sunday December 7, 2014



MASTER ARCHITECT SIR REGINALD BEAUCHAMPS CLAIMS THIS OCTAGONAL BUILDING DESIGN WILL BE THE NORM IN 1000 YEARS.¹

ENGLAND BUILDS THE FIRST LIBRARY OF THE FUTURE!

DEAR READERS, TODAY THE CITIZENS OF LONDON ATTENDED THE RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONY FOR THE FIRST LIBRARY IN THE WORLD THAT WAS COMPLETED AND CELEBRATED BEFORE IT WAS SEALED FOR 1000 YEARS! NO ONE WILL SET FOOT INTO THIS BUILDING UNTIL THE YEAR 2014, AND THE BOOKS INSIDE WILL BE ENJOYED BY THE WORLD'S FUTURE CHILDREN. THE DECISION TO INVEST IN THIS NATION'S FUTURE WAS PROMPTED BY THE DISCOVERY OF A PAPYRUS SCROLL FROM THE ROYAL LIBRARY OF ALEXANDRIA WAS DISCOVERED BY ARCHAEOLOGISTS, HAVING BEEN MIRACULOUSLY PRESERVED IN THE ACADEMY OF GONDISHAPUR IN WHAT WAS GUNDESHAPUR, IRAN. THE DISCOVERY OF THIS SCROLL REPRESENTED ONE OF THE FEW TENUOUS SURVIVING LINKS TO WHAT WAS ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT LIBRARIES IN THE WORLD.² THE ANCIENT LIBRARY OF ALEXANDRIA WAS A LOCUS OF LEARNING, THE MOST FAMOUS THINKERS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD SOUGHT ANSWERS THERE, AND THE LIBRARY ITSELF ACTED AS A BEACON OF CIVILIZATION AND HIGHER THINKING TO THE WORLD.² AND YET, FOLLOWING THE BURNING OF THE LIBRARY OF

ALEXANDRIA, RESEARCHERS CAN ONLY GUESS AT THE DEPTH AND WONDER OF THE WRITINGS THAT MUST HAVE EXISTED WITHIN ITS HALLOWED WALLS. TO PREVENT SUCH A GAP IN OUR WORLD'S HISTORY FROM OCCURRING AGAIN, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONED THE GLORIOUS BODLEIAN LIBRARY TO BE BUILT AND SEALED, SO THE EPITOME OF THIS WORLD'S KNOWLEDGE MIGHT BE PRESERVED AND SECURED FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. HOWEVER, THIS NOBLE ENDEAVOUR HAS BEEN HOTLY DEBATED AMONGST THE SEATS OF PARLIAMENT, FORCING THE QUEEN TO UTILIZE HER AUTHORITY TO BRING THIS ISSUE TO A CLOSE, SO THE LIBRARY COULD BE COMPLETED ON SCHEDULE.



CITIZENS COMPLAIN: SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE'S RECENT WORK WON'T BE READ FOR 1000 YEARS!

A SMALL BUT VOCAL MINORITY AMONGST THE CITIZENS AND EDUCATORS OF LONDON IMMEDIATELY OBJECTED TO THE ETHOS OF THIS NOBLE ENDEAVOUR. DURING A NUMBER OF PEACEFUL PROTESTS, THESE INTELLECTUAL GROUPS CLAIMED THAT THE VERY NOTION OF A SEALED LIBRARY IS IN DIRECT CONFLICT WITH THE PURPOSE OF A LIBRARY IN THE FIRST PLACE. THE ROYAL LIBRARY OF ALEXANDRIA WAS DESIGNED TO MAKE ALL KNOWLEDGE ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC, NOT TO HOARD IT FOR A SELECT FEW IN YEARS TO COME. EVERY PUBLIC LIBRARY SINCE THE LIBRARY OF ALEXANDRIA HAS BEEN UNLOCKED AND FREE TO USE BY ANYONE.

A NUMBER OF SIGNIFICANT AND CELEBRATED WRITERS HAVE BEEN INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS "FUTURE LIBRARY", AND MANY HAVE CHOSEN TO NOT PUBLISH THEIR HIGHLY ANTICIPATED WORKS, AND INSTEAD HAVE ONLY HAD A FEW COPIES PRINTED TO BE SEALED IN THE LIBRARY. SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE IS AMONG THESE SELECT FEW; HIS FIRST WORK SINCE THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES HAS BEEN PROMOTED WITH MUCH FANFARE BY HIS PUBLISHER. FANS WERE SHOCKED AND DISAPPOINTED TO LEARN THAT THEY WOULD NEVER BE FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO READ THIS MASTERPIECE, UNLESS THEY FOUND A WAY TO LIVE FOR ANOTHER 1000 YEARS.

THE BUILDING'S ORIGINAL DESIGN WAS



THE BURNING OF THE LIBRARY AT ALEXANDRIA IN 391 AD PUBLIC DOMAIN. AMBROSE DUDLEY, (FL. 1920S) - THE BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY, OBJECT 357910.²

COMMISSIONED BY ONE SIR REGINALD BEAUCHAMPS, WHO RECEIVED HIS EDUCATION AT OXFORD, AND WENT ON TO DESIGN THE REMODEL OF HER MAJESTY'S PRIVATE POWDER ROOM, TO MUCH ACCLAIM. "CREATING A DESIGN FOR A BUILDING THAT WILL STILL BE STANDING FOR ANOTHER THOUSAND YEARS IS A DAUNTING A GRUPELLING TASK," HE EXPLAINED. "THE MOST SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS IN LONDON ARE ALL BLESSED WITH A DIGNIFIED, ETERNAL AESTHETIC. BUT ARCHITECTURAL TRENDS COME IN AND OUT OF FASHION, JUST AS CLOTHING AND MUSIC HAS ITS PERIOD OF LIONIZATION WHICH THEN SLOWLY DECLINES. THIS BUILDING'S DESIGN HAD TO BE SO FORWARD-THINKING THAT ITS PERIOD OF RENOWN WILL NOT EVEN BEGIN FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER 500 YEARS. THEREFORE, I FELL BACK UPON A STYLE OF ARCHITECTURE THAT HAS NEVER BEEN PROMOTED IN THE MODERN WORLD, AND IS ACTUALLY RUMOURED TO BE INCONVENIENT AND STRUCTURALLY UNSOUND BY LESS FORWARD-THINKING CHAPS THAN MYSELF. THE NOTION OF THE "ROUND-ROOM" DESIGN ORIGINATED IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AND WAS RESTRICTED TO FUNERAL TOMBS. TODAY IT IS DRAWN ON "RELIGIOUSLY" IN SAFAVID, PURELY FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF MOSQUES. THE NOTION OF BUILDINGS CREATED SPHERICALLY, OR AS "DOMES" IS MEANT TO INCREASE BRAIN ACTIVITY AND CONVEY A FEELING OF SECURITY, WITHOUT EVER SAYING A WORD!"³ IN ANY CASE, DEAR READERS, THE RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONY FOR THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY TOOK PLACE AT 11:00 A.M. ON AUGUST 30TH, FOLLOWED BY THE CEMENTING OF THE DOORS AND WINDOWS, AND THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE "LIBRARY GUARD" COMMISSIONED AND TRAINED FOR JUST THIS PURPOSE: PRESERVING THE WORLD'S KNOWLEDGE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

¹ FOUR PILLARS HOTEL BLOG. "BODLEIAN LIBRARY." OCTOBER 3, 2012. <[HTTP://WWW.FOUR-PILLARS.CO.UK/BLOG/OXFORDS-BEAUTIFUL-BUILDINGS-AND-HERITAGE-DRAW-VISITORS-BACK-EVERY-YEAR/](http://www.four-pillars.co.uk/blog/oxfords-beautiful-buildings-and-heritage-draw-visitors-back-every-year/)> SEPTEMBER 2014.

² WIKIPEDIA, THE FREE ENCYCLOPEDIA. "LIBRARY OF ALEXANDRIA." <[HTTP://EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG/WIKI/LIBRARY_OF_ALEXANDRIA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Library_of_Alexandria)>. SEPTEMBER 2014

³ WIKIPEDIA, THE FREE ENCYCLOPEDIA. "DOME." <[HTTP://EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG/WIKI/DOME](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dome)> SEPTEMBER 2014.



AN ARTIST'S RENDERING OF PROFESSOR EINHARDT'S HYPOTHETICAL CITY ON MARS.

LIFE ON MARS? ONE MAN THINKS SO AND IS PREPARING FOR INVASION

BY KENT WHITTINGTON

IT WAS MY GREAT PLEASURE TO MEET PROFESSOR EMILE EINHARDT SEVERAL WEEKS AGO WHILE TAKING PART IN THE 10TH ANNUAL STEAMSHIP RACE HELD AT LORD PRESTON'S ESTATE IN IPSWICH. AS YOU MAY RECALL, PROFESSOR EINHARDT WAS THE PILOT OF THE EXCELSIOR/EXCELSIOR II, A MAN/STEAM POWERED ORNITHOPTER. WHILE HE DID NOT WIN (KUDOS TO MISS SALLY SUNDAIL), HE WAS A VERY GOOD SPORT ABOUT IT. I FOUND THE MAN VERY ENTERTAINING AND A WONDERFUL CONVERSATIONALIST, AND HE REGALED ME AND SEVERAL OTHERS ENDLESSLY WITH HIS WONDERFUL STORIES AND THEORIES.

ONE OF HIS THEORIES THAT I FOUND MOST INTRIGUING WAS HIS THOUGHTS REGARDING LIFE ON THE PLANET MARS. MANY ASTRONOMERS AND SCIENTIST, SUCH AS HIMSELF, HAVE POSTULATED THE IDEA THAT LIFE EXISTS ON THE RED PLANET. IT WAS ITALIAN ASTRONOMER GIOVANNI SCHIAPARELLI WHO RECENTLY ANNOUNCED THE DISCOVERY OF A NETWORK OF NARROW LINES ON MARS, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS CANALS. THIS DISCOVERY HAD CAUSED QUITE A STIR IN THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY, SUGGESTING THAT LIFE ON MARS DID IN FACT EXIST. PROFESSOR EINHARDT, CHIEF AMONG THIS GROUP OF INTELLECTUALS, ASSURES THIS REPORTER THAT LIFE ON MARS IS MORE THAN THEORY. MORESO, HE SAYS HE CAN PROVE IT.

I WAS INVITED AND MET WITH THE PROFESSOR A FEW DAYS AFTER THE RACE AT HIS MODEST HOME IN IPSWICH. IT WAS NOT DIFFICULT TO FIND HIS HOME, AS THE LAWN IS STREWN WITH A NUMBER OF INVENTIONS AND DEVICES, INCLUDING THE REMNANTS OF HIS DOWNED ORNITHOPTER. I WAS GREETED BY THE PROFESSOR'S "MANSERVANT," EDGAR, AN AUTOMATON BUTLER. EDGAR LEAD ME THROUGH THE HOME, WINDING AROUND PILES OF BOOKS AND PERIODICALS STACKED

HAPHAZARDLY AND STREWN ABOUT THE FLOOR. DEVICES BEYOND THIS REPORTER'S DESCRIPTION HUNG FROM THE CEILING AND SAT PLACIDLY UPON BOOKSHELVES, ALONG WITH A SINGLE LAZY BLACK CAT WHO SLEPT THE ENTIRETY OF MY VISIT.

PROFESSOR EINHARDT GREETED ME IN HIS LABORATORY/OBSERVATORY AND, AFTER DISMISSING EDGAR, SAT ME DOWN AND SO THAT HE COULD DISCUSS HIS OBSERVATIONS IN GREATER DETAIL. IT WAS AT THAT TIME THAT HE REVEALED HIS MARVEL, A GIANT TELESCOPE CAPABLE OF OBSERVING THE SURFACE OF OUR NEARBY NEIGHBOUR. "I HAVE MADE A POINT TO OBSERVE MARS AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE," PROFESSOR EINHARDT SAID, "THE CANALS ARE REAL, AND WHAT'S MORE I HAVE SEEN OTHER EVIDENCE OF LIFE!" BELIEF IN HIS CLAIMS WAS DUBIOUS FOR MY PART, UNTIL HE INVITED ME TO OBSERVE FOR MYSELF, AND I SAW THROUGH HIS LENS WAS MARVELLOUS AND DREADFUL INDEED!

NOT ONLY WERE THE CANALS REAL, GREAT WATERWAYS FLOWING WITH THE SUSTAINING WATERS OF A DESERT PLANET, BUT WHEREVER THOSE CANALS CONNECTED SAT GREAT CITIES. WHILE I COULD NOT SEE LIFE, AS IT WERE, THE EVIDENCE OF SUCH LIFE LAY ACROSS THE ENTIRE SURFACE OF THE PLANET.

"WATER IS SCARCE ON MARS," PROFESSOR EINHARDT REMARKED. "WHILE WE HAVE IT IN ABUNDANCE, THE CANALS SEEM TO BE THE ONLY SOURCE AVAILABLE, PERHAPS STEMMING FROM SOME UNDERGROUND AQUIFER. I HAVE SEEN NO CROPS AND LITTLE IF ANY GREENERY, SUGGESTING THAT ANY FOOD THE MARTIANS PRODUCE IS LIKELY EITHER GROWN IN GREENHOUSES OR UNDERGROUND AS WELL, SUCH AS MUSHROOMS AND FUNGUS."

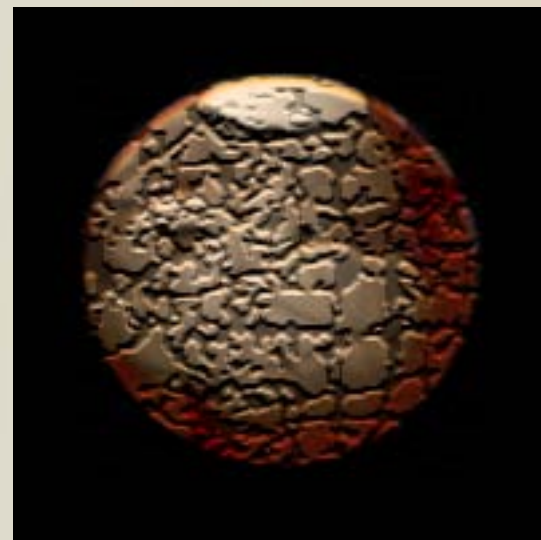
THIS INFORMATION CONCERNS PROFESSOR EINHARDT DUE TO THE FACT THAT HE BELIEVES THAT IF WE CAN SEE THEM, THEY CAN MOST ASSUREDLY OBSERVE OUR WORLD AS WELL. "I HAVE SEEN SIGNS OF MILITARY CRAFT ON THE SURFACE AS WELL," HE WENT ON TO SAY. "IT IS MY BELIEF THAT IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THE MARTIANS BEGIN PLANNING FOR AN INVASION. I BELIEVE THAT IT IS IN THE GOVERNMENTS BEST INTEREST TO BEGIN PLANS TO EITHER RETALIATE OR CREATE A PREEMPTIVE STRIKE AGAINST THE MARTIANS BEFORE THEY STRIKE."

IT WAS AT THIS POINT DURING MY VISIT THAT THE PROFESSOR SHOWED ME HIS SOLUTION. IT WAS A MODEL OF A SPACECRAFT, LITTLE MORE THAN SIX INCHES IN HEIGHT. HE ASSURED ME THAT THIS WAS MERELY A REPLICA OF THE ARMADA HE WAS PROPOSING TO THE EMPIRE FOR A PREEMPTIVE INVASION FORCE TO MARS. THE MODEL SHIP HAD BEEN LATCHED DOWN ONTO A TABLETOP, BUT ONCE RELEASED, BEGAN TO FLOAT INTO THE AIR IN EARNEST UNTIL IT FINALLY STOPPED TO REST UPON THE CEILING. IT WAS, TO SAY THE LEAST, AMAZING.

I INQUIRED AS TO THE SOURCE OF THE LIFT, WHETHER THE PROFESSOR WAS PROPOSING SOME SORT OF HYDROGEN POWERED AIRSHIP. HE LAUGHED THEN, AND SPOKE OF A STRANGE ELEMENT HE HAD DISCOVERED FROM A METEOR CRASH SOME MONTHS AGO. THE ELEMENT,

WHEN EMPLOYED WITH MACHINES, SEEMED TO NEGATE GRAVITY, ALLOWING THE VESSEL TO FLOAT. THE ELEMENT, DUBBED AETHERIUM, PROVIDED UNLIMITED LIFT, BUT NOT PROPULSION. "I HOPE TO HAVE THIS PROBLEM SOLVED IN THE WEEKS TO COME," HE SAID.

WHETHER ANY OF PROFESSOR EINHARDT'S THEORIES HOLD TRUE REMAIN TO BE SEEN. I AM TOLD THAT HE WILL BE ADDRESSING THE QUEEN'S PARLIAMENT AS WELL AS HER MAJESTY'S SCIENCE ADVISERS WITHIN THE WEEK TO INFORM THEM OF HIS OBSERVATIONS AND SUGGEST A PROPER COURSE OF ACTION. WHILE MY OWN THOUGHTS ABOUT A MARTIAN INVASION FORCE ARE DUBIOUS AT BEST, ONE CANNOT DENY WHAT ONE'S OWN EYES HAVE SEEN. WHATEVER IS TRUE, IT IS THIS REPORTER'S BELIEF THAT LIFE DOES IN FACT EXIST UPON THE RED PLANET'S SURFACE AND THEY HAVE THEIR EYES AIMED AT OUR BLUE WORLD. FOR WHAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN.



AN IMPRESSION OF THE PLANET MARS TAKEN FROM THE VIEW OF ITALIAN ASTRONOMER GIOVANNI SCHIAPARELLI'S IMPRESSIVE TELESCOPE.



The Aether Review Of Books

In Latitude of Temperance, by Ichabod Temperance

WA LIGHT BREEZE STIRS ME SLOWLY TO A RELUCTANT CONSCIOUSNESS. I MUSTA STUMBLED OFF TO BED AFTER LOTS OF WILD CAVORTIN' AND CARRYIN' ON WITH ALL THEM MONSTER MASHERS. I HAD FORGOTTEN HOW WEARY I WAS FOR A LITTLE WHILE THERE. I HOPE MISS PLUMTARTT GOT TO BED ALL RIGHT. LOOKS LIKE I ACCIDENTALLY FELL ASLEEP WITHOUT BLOWIN' THE CANDLE OUT. I GUESS I JUST STRIPPED OUTTA ALL MY CLOTHES AND FELL ASLEEP AS SOON AS MY HEAD HIT THE PILLOW. THAT CANDLE IS SPUTTERING IN THAT LIGHT BREEZE THAT AWAKENED ME. IT MUST BE COMING THROUGH THAT TALL, LATTICED, DIAMOND PANE WINDOW THAT IS PUSHED OPEN, INVITING THE SILVERY BLUE BEAMS OF A FULL, FROSTY MOON TO FILL THE SPACIOUS BEDCHAMBER. PALE WHITE, DIAPHANOUS CURTAINS DANCE IN THE UNEARTHLY GLOW OF THE WINTRY BEAMS.

INEXPLICABLY, MY BODY TINGLES WITH AN UN-NAMED EXPECTANCY. MY HEART IS A FLUTTER, LIKE THAT OF A RABBIT, BEING PURSUED BY A RAVENOUS ANIMAL.

WHY IS IT THAT I HAVE THE FEELING OF BEING TRAPPED AND HELPLESS BEFORE AN OVERPOWERING PREDATOR?

I FEEL AS IF I AM AWAITING SOMEONE'S ARRIVAL. I HEAR FLUTTERING SOUNDS OF MOVEMENT OUTSIDE. NOW I SEE IT! A LARGE BAT FLITS ABOUT OUTSIDE THE OPEN WINDOW. IS IT LOOKING AT ME? IT SEEMS TO GATHER ITSELF BEFORE DARTING IN THE APERTURE. ONCE INSIDE, ITS ERRATIC MOVEMENTS SETTLE AS IT HOLDS ITSELF SUSPENDED IN ONE PLACE.

OH, MY GOODNESS! THE CREATURE APPEARS TO DROP A PAIR OF HUMAN LEGS BENEATH IT AND IN A FRACTION OF A SECOND HAS TRANSFORMED INTO HUMAN FORM! I KNOW THIS FORM! IT IS THE POWERFUL AND SENSUAL FIGURE OF THE AMAZING VAMPYRELLAH! SHE STANDS WITHOUT MOVING.

I LIE IN BED, AS STILL AS I CAN, BUT SHE SEES ME. HER BOTTOMLESS EYES LOCK ON MINE. THEY ALMOST PREVENT ME FROM SEEING ANY MORE OF HER INCREDIBLE OUTFIT. SHE HAS EXCHANGED HER TINY RED BATHING SUIT FOR AN EXTREMELY SHEER PINK NEGLIGEE. JUST BARELY CLEARING HER COCKED HIPS, ITS EPHEMERAL NOTHINGNESS DOES LITTLE TO PROTECT THE BODY IT FAILS TO HIDE. SHE HAS ALSO EXCHANGED HER KNEE HIGH BOOTS FOR A PAIR OF EXCESSIVELY HIGH HEELED, THIGH TOPPING WADERS. "HAH, HAH, HAUGH,, YOU ARE FOR ME, ICHSABOD..." "YOU'RE NOT GONNA DRAIN ME OF MY VITAL BODILY FLUIDS ARE YOU, MA'AM?"

"DA."

-GULP!-

AFTER A LONG STARE, VAMPYRELLAH BEGINS A SCINTILLATINGLY SLOW MOTION, PASSION PRIMED, PANTHER INSINUATION TOWARD MY CANOPIED BED. SHE HESITATES IN A BREATHLESS EXPECTANCY FOR TWO MOMENTS BEFORE WRENCHING THE COVERS AWAY, EXPOSING ME TO HER HUNGRY AND ENCOMPASSING VISIONS. SHE TAKES A MOMENT TO DRINK ME IN. WITH A QUICK POUNCE, THE SHE-CAT LEAPS UPON THE BED TO STRADDLE MY HELPLESS FORM. HER BREATHING INCREASES INTO GREAT GASPING GULPS AND SHE COMES DOWN HARD ON MY CHEST WITH HER RED NAILED FINGERS PINNING ME TO THE MATTRESS. WILD EYES FLAME WITH MADDENED DESIRE AS SHE GRIMACES. VIOLENTLY

SHAKING ME BY THE SHOULDERS AND BARING HER ANIMAL FANGS SHE HISSES:

"WAEKE AU-UP! WAEKE AU-UP! ICKY, M'BOY, YAER'RE 'AVIN A BAD DREAEM!"

I AWAKEN FOR REAL THIS TIME TO FIND THAT THE VOLUPTUOUS VAMPYRELLAH HAS, DISAPPOINTINGLY, TURNED OUT TO BE MY SCOTTISH PAL.

"IT WASN'T REALLY THAT BAD OF A DREAM, POL." "TEE, HEE! THE CONDITION I FIND YE IN LENDS ME TE' BELIEVE YE'. TEE, HEE!"

"Oops."

"THINK NOOTHIN' O' IT M'LAD. I'D OFFAER YE A DRAENK O' ME RUM TE' HELP YE' BACK TE' SLEEP, BHAUGHTTE WITH A NAME LOIKES TEMPERANCE..."

"I'M ON VACATION!"

"THEN 'ERE YE' GO, M'LAD."

"DID YOU HEAR SOMETHING? SOMETHING LIKE SOMEBODY TRYING TO PUSH UP A POORLY MADE CHEAPY WINDOW SET AS YOU MIGHT FIND IN A BADLY CONSTRUCTED SHABBY MOTEL LIKE WHAT WE HAVE IN THIS TINY, HOTEL-LIKE ROOM WE HAVE TO SHARE AND THAT CUT-RATE CASTLE WINDOW SET OF OUR DOUBLE SLEEPER?"

"AYE! OH! LOOKS THERE, ICKY! A TERRIBLE AND FRIGHTENING FACE APPEARS AT OUR WINDOW, HIGH ABOVE THE GROUND! WILD AND WIDE EYES APPEAR TO US FROM OVER THE MOUSTACHE O' A GIGANTIC WALRUS! THE GIANT, MAN-EATING SEALS HAVE FOUND US!"

"I DON'T THINK SO, POL. THE FACE THAT SUPPORTS THE ENORMOUS AND BUSHY MOUSTACHE IS THAT OF AN ELDERLY AND EXASPERATED MAN. A MANE OF WHITE HAIR SURROUNDS HIS ANGRY FEATURES AS HE POUNDS ON THE WINDOW IN A DETERMINED EFFORT TO GAIN ENTRANCE TO THIS ROOM. SHOULD WE LET HIM IN?"

"E'LL BAE EXPECTING TAE PAY A PAERCENTAGE O' THE BILL, BHAUGHTTE AYE, LET'S LET 'IM IN."

BY RAISING THE WINDOW, I FIND IT EASIER TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE GENTLEMAN OUTSIDE.

"HOWDY SIR, MAY WE HELP YOU?"

"ACH! I MUST KNOW IF YOU ARE OF HUMANITIES OR OF THE WALKING CORPSES. SPEAK QUICKLY, FRIEND OR FIEND!?"

"YE' BAE THE HA-WHUNNE A'KNOCKIN' OAN OOUR WINDAE LATE O' NIGHT. OIYE BAE THINKINS WE ARE THAE HAH-WHUNNES TE' ASK YE' THAT."

"I AM PROUD TO BE OF THE HUMANS!"

"YAE'RE NAME, PLEAESE, YE' CRAZY OL' COOT O' A HUMAN."

"MEIN NAME IST ABRAHAM VAN HEKSINK!"

"AN' HOW DE' YE MANAGE TE' BAE PAEPIN' IN OOUR WINDAE LATE O' NIGHT WITH AET BAEIN' FIFTEEN FEET IN THE AIYRE, DOUOTCHIE?"

"I STAND UPON THE SHOULDERS OF MEIN ASSISTANT, ROEMIN PULANSKY. SAY HELLO, ROEMIN."

"HAHALLO."

"UNLESS YOUR ASSISTANT IS TWELVE FOOT TALL, MEISTER HEKSINK, I DINNAE THAENK YE' BAE MAKIN'S THAESE WAENDAE."

"ACH, ROEMIN STANDS UPON THE SHOULDERS OF AN AMERICAN JOURNALIST WEARING A CLIMATOLOGICALLY INAPPROPRIATE, THIN FABRIC-ED, AND DISREPUTABLE WHITE SUIT."

"HELLO, UP THERE. THE NAMES, COALSHACK, CARL COALSHACK. I'M WITH THE INDEPENDENT WORLD NEWS AGENCY OF CHICAGO, ILLINOIS. YOU MAY HAVE HEARD OF ME."

"YESSIR! I THINK I HAVE! DON'T YOU GOTTA FUNNY HANDLE HUNG ON YOU? THE 'NIGHT'..."

"SKULKER."

"YESSIR, THAT'S IT! THE NIGHTSKULKER!"

"AYE, AN' 'OW MAY WAE'S BAE 'ELPING Y'LADS?"

"ACH! THINK ARE WE VAMPIRE PLOTZEN IS HATCHINZ YONDERZ!"

"YESSIR, WE ALREADY FIGGERED THAT. SAY, WHAT ARE YA'LL PLANNIN' ON DOIN'?"

"VEE SHALL SLAY ZEE FOUL BEASTS AS ZHEY LIE DORMANT IN THEIR ABOMINABLE COFFINS!"

"YA KNOW, THIS FAR SOUTH, THIS TIME OF YEAR, THE DAYLIGHT HOURS DON'T LAST TOO LONG. IN FACT, I THINK THEY HAVE ALREADY PASSED WHILE WE WERE HERE TALKING."

"ACH! DRAUGHTTE!" SIGH.

"UM, HELLO UP THERE, IF I MAY HURRY THIS PROCEEDING ALONG, IT IS GETTING KIND OF DIFFICULT TO STAND HERE WITH TWO MEN STACKED UP ON MY SHOULDERS. WE ARE THREE VAMPIRE KILLERS. PLUS, I HOPE TO GET A SCOOP ON A TERRIFIC STORY. COULD YOU HELP US OUT BY MAYBE OPENING A DOOR OR SOMETHING FOR US?"

"NAE SO FAST, JOURNO JOCKEY. YE' SAID THERE BAE THREE VAMPIRE KILLERS AMONG YE'. I COOUNTS Y'SELF AND DOUOTCHIE 'ERE, BHAUGHTTE YE' CANNAE COOUNT THE APPRENTICE, ROEMIN, AS A KEELLER."

"ACH, RIGHT YOU ARE, YOU PICKY SCOTSMAN..."

"AYE."

"ACH, SPEAK UP LIEBCHEN, YOU ARE DOWN THERE, NOT YOU ARE?"

"YES, MR. VAN HEKSINK. LIKE, I AM STANDING BY WITH A BIG SHARP WOODEN STAKE AND A HEAVY MALLET TO LIKE, DRIVE THAT SUCKER HOME WITH!"

"TEE, HEE! WHAT'S THIS? TIS' THE VOICE O' A YOOUNG GEL OIYE HEARS, TIS' INNAE'T? HAH-WHOOT'S YE' NAME LASSIE?"

"MY NAME IS BUFFIEGH, BUFFIEGH THE VAMPIRE SL... EEK!" CLATTER, CLATTER "LIKE, I THINK THERE'S A VAMPIRE DOWN HERE WALKING TOWARDS ME!"

"I BEG YOUR PARDON MY DEAR. I DID NOT INTEND TO STARTLE YOU. IF I HAD KNOWN YOU VERE SO JUMPY, PERHAPS I VOULD HAVE VHISTLED TO ALERT YOU TO MY APPROACH, BUT OF COURSE, MY FANGS MAKE THE VHISTLING MOST DIFFICULT MY DEAR. PLEASE ALLOW ME TO ASSIST YOU. YOU SEEM TO HAVE DROPPED YOUR SHARPENED WOODEN STAKE AND HEAVY MALLET. I SHALL RETRIEVE THEM FOR YOU. HERE ARE YOUR GRUESOMELY GHASTLY, WOODEN INSTRUMENTS OF MALICIOUS MURDERS, MY BLOND, PONY-TAILED CHILD."

"LIKE, UH, THANKS, MISTER."

"COUNT, ACTUALLY. COUNT HELA GIGALOSI, MY DEAR. TELL ME, ARE YOU OF THE AGE OF CONSENT YET?"

"EEK! A REAL VAMPIRE! OH MY GOSH, YOU'RE GONNA SINK YOUR FANGS INTO MY NECK AND THEN RAVAGE MY YOUNG, INNOCENT BODY! EEK!"

"AS MUCH AS I WOULD LIKE TO MY DEAR, NO. YOU SEE, WE ARE ALL HERE UNDER AN HONORARY TRUCE. I THINK THAT MIGHT EVEN BE EXTENDED TO YOU BRAVE, FEARLESS GENTLEMEN AND THE LOVELY YOUNG GIRL THAT VISH TO COURAGEOUSLY DRIVE GREAT WOODEN STAKES THROUGH OUR TIMELESS, UNKNOWNABLE HEARTS WHILE VEE ARE HELPLESSLY COMATOSE, AND PEACEFULLY AT REST IN OUR COFFINS, YES? HOW CHARMING."

The Aether Review Of Books

In Latitude of Temperance, by Ichabod Temperance

WELL, DEAR READERS, THIS IS DEFINITELY A FIRST FOR BELOVED STEAMPUNK AUTHOR ICHABOD TEMPERANCE! HIS RECENT WORK IN LATITUDE OF TEMPERANCE PRESENTS READERS WITH THE SENSUALITY AND DANGER OF VAMPIRES! THAT IS CERTAINLY NOT SOMETHING YOU WANT TO ENCOUNTER WHILE YOU ARE ON VACATION!

ICHABOD TEMPERANCE'S SOUTHERN GENTILITY IS PUT TO THE TEST WITH THE BOLD AND SENSUAL VAMPYRELLAH. WHEN ICHABOD FIRST ENCOUNTERS THE VAMPIRE, SHE IS IN BAT-FORM. THE SIGHT OF HER TRANSFORMATION IS ENOUGH FOR ICHABOD TO IDENTIFY HER, BY HER APPEARANCE ALONE. APPARENTLY, VAMPYRELLAH IS WELL-KNOWN AMONGST THOSE IN THE KNOW! YET THE ALLURING, PSEUDO-SEDUCTION OF HER INITIAL ATTACK QUICKLY MAKES WAY FOR A PREDATORY POUNCE ONTO THE BED, WHERE SHE PINS HIM TO THE MATTRESS AND ICHABOD IS FORCED TO STARE INTO HER "WILD EYES FLAME WITH MADDENED DESIRE AS SHE GRIMACES"!

HOWEVER, ICHABOD IS PROMPTLY SHAKEN AWAKE BY HIS SCOTTISH PAL, POL. THE EVENING IS THEN FURTHER INTERRUPTED BY THE ARRIVAL OF THE INDEPENDENT WORLD NEWS AGENCY OF CHICAGO, ILLINOIS. THESE BRAVE SOULS ARE VAMPIRE HUNTERS, WHOSE GOAL WAS TO STAKE VAMPIRES IN THEIR COFFINS WHILE THEY SLEEP. THE AUTHOR USES A PARTICULARLY ROBUST BIT OF HUMOUR AS HE NAMES ONE OF THESE (FEMALE) VAMPIRE HUNTERS BUFEIGH—BUFEIGH THE VAMPIRE SLAYER! HER VERNACULAR AND IDIOMS DO ACCURATELY REFLECT THE CHARACTER FROM THE POPULAR TEEN'S TELEVISION SHOW.

THE SCENE IS BROUGHT TO A CLOSE BY THE ARRIVAL OF A REAL VAMPIRE—ONE COUNT HELA GIGALOSI WHO SEEMS A GENTEEL, AFFABLE SORT, WHO REFERENCES A TRUCE BETWEEN HIMSELF AND HUMAN KIND, WHICH PREVENTS ANY ATTACK.

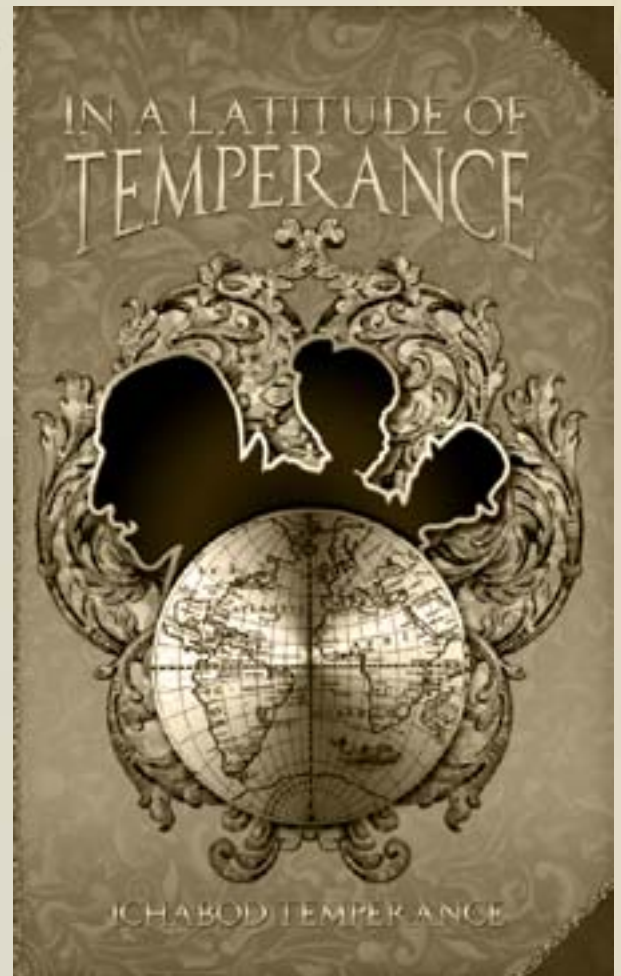
WELL READERS, THIS WAS DEFINITELY AN ACTION-PACKED SCENE! A BIT MORE RACY AND RAZOR-EDGE THAN OUR USUAL FARE IN ONE OF ICHABOD TEMPERANCE'S ADVENTURES. THE COMBINATION OF SENSUAL AND DEADLY IN A VILLAIN ADDS A CERTAIN SPICE TO THE ACTION. AND THE HUMOUR CUNNINGLY INTERSPERSED THROUGHOUT EACH SCENE HELPS TO LIGHTEN THE MOOD, SO IT IS NOT ALL DARK, ALL THE

TIME.

THE AUTHOR EMPLOYS A DELIBERATE MISLEAD IN THE BEGINNING OF THE STORY, WHEN ICHABOD DREAMS HE IS FACING A REAL VAMPIRE, THE DREADED VAMPYRELLAH, BUT WAKES TO FIND IT WAS MERELY A FANTASY, FUELLED NO DOUBT BY "LOTS OF WILD CAVORTIN' AND CARRYIN' ON WITH ALL THEM MONSTER MASHERS." THE INTRODUCTION OF A REAL VAMPIRE AT THE LAST SECOND IS UNEXPECTED, AND BRINGS THE READERS FULL CIRCLE. WHAT WILL ICHABOD DO NOW THAT HE IS ACTUALLY CONFRONTED WITH A VAMPIRE? PERHAPS THIS CONFRONTATION WITH A VAMPIRE MIGHT GO A LITTLE BETTER THAN HIS DREAM CONSIDERING THE FACT THAT THIS VAMPIRE HAPPENS TO BE MALE!

FINALLY, ICHABOD HAS INTRODUCED A NUMBER OF NEW AND VIBRANT CHARACTERS TO THIS PARTICULAR STORY. THE PROSPECT OF VAMPIRE HUNTERS IS VERY PROMISING...THAT IS A UNIQUE AND ODD GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS, WHOM I EXPECT WOULD KEEP READERS ENTERTAINED AND INTRIGUED.

WELL READERS, YOU WON'T FIND OUT MORE UNTIL YOU READ ICHABOD TEMPERANCE'S LATEST MASTERPIECE, IN LATITUDE OF TEMPERANCE!



AUTHOR ICHABOD TEMPERANCE

SHOULD YOU WISH TO SEND A LETTER TO THE EDITOR, SUBMIT YOUR WRITTEN WORK, OR OFFER A TIP REGARDING A POTENTIAL STORY (EG. POLITICAL UPHEAVAL, CRIME, SPECIAL EVENTS, ART AND MUSIC) PLEASE CONTACT LESLIE ORTON AT: ORTONLJ@HOTMAIL.COM.

The Aether's Weekly Steamswaddle

By Tropple E. Armitage

THE GLASS CEILING
A MYSTERIOUS SIGHT
INDEED GREETED
THE EYES OF YOUR
CORRESPONDENT ON HIS
MORNING PROMENADE IN HYDE PARK. IT
WAS BARELY AFTER SUNRISE AND I WAS
WALKING NEAR THE GLASS EDIFICE WHICH
IS THE GRAND EXHIBITION HALL WHEN I
ESPIED MOVEMENT ON ITS ROOF.

ON CLOSER EXAMINATION I SAW THEY
WERE WHAT I TOOK TO BE WORKMEN,
BUT AS I GREW CLOSER I SAW THEY WERE
IN FACT WOMEN. YOU CAN IMAGINE
MY SURPRISE AT SUCH AN INDECOROUS
SIGHT AS I NOTED SEVERAL WOMEN
SCRABBLING ACROSS THE GLASS SURFACES,
THOUGH I COULD NOT DISCERN WHAT
THEY WERE DOING. BEING OF CURIOUS
MIND, I SOUGHT SOME ADVICE FROM A
MAN STANDING NEARBY, MR BARNEY
SMITH, WHO TOLD ME HE WAS A GLAZIER.
EVIDENTLY THERE WAS AN UNFORTUNATE
INCIDENT LAST WEEK, WHICH SEEMS TO
HAVE GONE UNREPORTED IN THE PRESS.

A GLASS PANEL EVIDENTLY CAME LOOSE
FROM ITS FIXINGS AND CRASHED TO
THE FLOOR IN THE HALL DESTROYING
SEVERAL EXHIBITS AND SHOWERING
SOME UNFORTUNATE WORKERS IN GLASS
REQUIRING THEM TO SEEK TREATMENT AT
ST THOMAS'S HOSPITAL.

NONE OF THIS ENLIGHTENED ME AS
WHY THIS HOARD OF WOMEN WERE
ON THE ROOF OF THE HALL, BUT MR
SMITH SOON EXPLAINED THAT FEARING
FURTHER CATASTROPHES IF HE SENT MEN
TO REFASTEN THE REMAINING GLASS
DUE TO THEIR WEIGHT HE HAD INSTEAD
EMPLOYED THE LIGHTEST YOUNG WOMEN
HE COULD FIND TO UNDERTAKE THE
WORK. HE SAID THAT THEY WOULD BE
ABLE TO LOOK UP WITH PRIDE AT THE
GLASS CEILING WHEN THEIR WORK WAS
DONE. BEING OF A CAUTIOUS DISPOSITION
YOUR CORRESPONDENT MIGHT JUST AVOID
A VISIT TO THE GLASS ROOFED HALL

AND SUGGESTS THAT YOU DEAR READERS
CONSIDER DOING LIKEWISE.

YOUR HUMBLE CORRESPONDENT,

TROPPL E ARMITAGE

JOUSTERS TAKE CARE
IT IS WITH SOME
SORROW THAT I MUST
REPORT THAT THE
LATEST PASTIME FOR
THOSE FOR WHOM WORK DOES NOT
CONSUME THEIR DAYS IS NOT WITHOUT
ITS DANGERS. I AM OF COURSE TALKING
ABOUT AERIAL JOUSTING, THE SPORT
THAT IS FAST REPLACING ROCKET PACKS
AS ENTERTAINMENT IN HYDE PARK AND
OTHER PLACES.

INVENTED BY BARON OBERKLIEN AND
BROUGHT TO OUR SHORES BY HIS COUSIN
LORD ESTINGTON, THE SPORT HAS
QUICKLY SPREAD BUT NOT WITHOUT
MISHAP. ON SUNDAY, A FINE ALMOST
WINDLESS DAY, TWO JOUSTERS, EACH
SUSPENDED BY LEATHER HARNESSSES FROM
INDIVIDUAL BALLOONS ASCENDED INTO
THE SKY. THEY WERE EACH ARMED WITH
A LONG JOUSTING POLE WITH WHICH
TO HIT THE OTHERS BALLOON WITH
THE OBJECT OF PUNCTURING IT WHICH
THEY NO DOUBT WOULD HAVE DONE
EXCEPT THAT ONE OF THEM CONTINUED
TO ASCEND TO A POINT WHERE HE WAS
TAKEN BY A GUST AND DISAPPEARED OVER
THE ROOFTOPS LEAVING HIS OPPONENT
WATCHING HELPLESSLY. QUESTIONING
THIS PHENOMENON WITH AUGUST
OXFORD PROFESSOR, NORMAN WITHERLY,
I DISCOVERED THAT THE AMOUNT THAT
EACH JOUSTER RISES IS GOVERNED BY
THE BALANCE OF THEIR WEIGHT AND
THE AMOUNT OF LIGHTER THAN AIR GAS
EMPLOYED IN THE BALLOON.

I SAY 'WITH SOME SORROW' BECAUSE I

HAVE QUITE ENJOYED WATCHING THESE
JOUSTING TOURNAMENTS AND NOW FEAR
THAT THEY MAY BE BANNED FOR WANT
OF A PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE
PHYSICAL LAWS GOVERNING WEIGHT AND
BALLOONS.

I AM PLEASED TO REPORT THAT THE
ERRANT JOUSTER WAS FOUND CLINGING
TO THE SPIRE ATOP ST PAULS CATHEDRAL
FROM WHENCE HE WAS RESCUED WITH
SOME DIFFICULTY BY THE WESTMINSTER
FIRE BRIGADE. AS TO WHY HE DIDN'T
USE HIS JOUSTING STICK TO PUNCTURE
HIS OWN BALLOON SO AS TO SLOWLY
DESCEND, I HAVE NOT EVEN AN INKLING
OF AN IDEA. CLEARLY INTELLECT IS NOT A
REQUISITE FOR BEING AN AERIAL JOUSTER!
I CAN CONFIRM THAT IT IS NOT A SPORT I
SHALL ENJOY BEYOND BEING A SPECTATOR,
THOUGH PERHAPS THERE ARE THOSE WHO
WISHED I WOULD.

YOUR HUMBLE CORRESPONDENT,

TROPPL E ARMITAGE