

The Aether Chronicle

The Imaginary Alternate History of the Steampunk Empire

From Tuesday December 31, 2013 to Friday January 10, 2014



LEFT TO RIGHT: MICKEY MCSQUILLE, "BALDY" BICKNELL (A.K.A. THE HUGE HUNTER), ETHAN HOPKINS, JOHNNY BRAINERD, STEAM MAN.

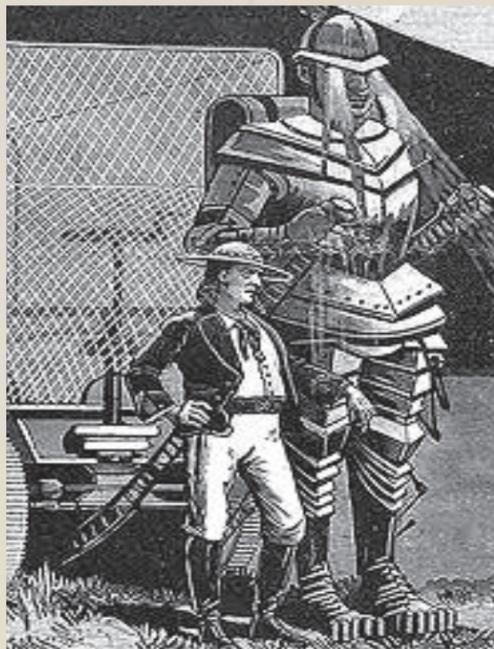
The World's First Mechanical Man

ORIGINALLY, THE NOTION THAT MAN AND MACHINE DIFFERED VERY LITTLE WAS GREETED WITH SCORN. SURELY, MAN IS THE HIGHEST LIFE FORM! MADE IN THE CREATOR'S IMAGE, THERE CAN BE NOTHING TO BE IMPROVED UPON! AND YET MAN PURSUED MACHINE, ATTEMPTING TO EVER-BETTER THE TOOLS THAT MADE MAN SUPREME. IT ALL BEGAN WITH THE WHEEL, WHICH WOULD EVOLVE TO CARRY HEAVY LOADS FOR MAN, LEAVING HIM FREE TO BASK IN HIS OWN SUPERIORITY. WHEN MAN REGARDED THE WHEEL TROTTING OBEDIENTLY BEHIND HIM, PERFORMING HIS DUTIES FOR HIM, MAN THOUGHT: "I WONDER WHAT ELSE THESE MACHINES COULD DO FOR ME?"

THE FIRST RUMOURS OF A 'MECHANICAL MAN' SURFACED IN 1868, AND THE RUMOUR DESCRIBED AN AUTOMATON CALLED 'THE STEAM MAN.' ACCOUNTS OF THE STEAM MAN WERE RELEGATED TO THE TABLOIDS, WHICH INSISTED THAT A TEENAGE DWARF JOHNNY BRAINERD INVENTED "A MAN THAT SHALL GO BY STEAM." THE STEAM MAN'S NICKNAME WAS THE HUGS HUNTER, A NICKNAME THAT ALSO BELONGED TO BALDY BICKNELL, A HUNTER FRIEND OF JOHNNY BRAINERD (ABOVE.)

IN LATE 1857 FRANK READE SR. PURCHASED THE PATENTS FOR THE STEAM MAN FROM JOHNNY BRAINERD, THEN SOUGHT TO IMPROVE THE ORIGINAL MODEL. THE NEXT "MECHANOID" (MECHANICAL-HUMANOID) WOULD BE CALLED THE STEAM MAN MARK II. HE WOULD THEN GO ON TO CREATE

A STEAM MAN MARK III, BEFORE DETERMINING THAT THE NEXT GREAT MECHANICAL FEAT WOULD BE POWERED BY ELECTRICITY, RATHER THAN STEAM. THERE WERE EVEN RUMOURS THAT FRANK READE JR. DABBLED IN A MECHANICAL HORSE, POWERED BY ELECTRICITY, AS AN ALTERNATIVE 'HORSELESS CARRIAGE.'



FRANK READE JR. ON TOUR WITH HIS ELECTRIC MAN.

Electricity Creates Life?

AFTER FRANK READE JR. HAD IMPROVED HIS FATHER'S STEAM MECHANOIDS, HE THEN TURNED TO ELECTRICITY TO POWER HIS

MECHANICAL MEN. THE RESULT WAS THE ELECTRIC MAN (BELOW). IN 1886, READE JR. TRAVELLED THE WORLD WITH HIS 'METAL GIANT'. FRANK READE JR.'S BELIEF WAS THAT ELECTRICITY WAS THE FUTURE SOURCE OF POWER MANKIND WAS MEANT TO TAME. BY HIS ACCOUNT, ELECTRICITY HAD MANY MORE USES THAT MAN HAD NOT YET BEGUN TO TAP, AND ONE DAY THESE 'MECHANICAL MEN' WOULD POPULATE THE STREETS, THUS IMPROVING MANKIND'S QUALITY OF LIFE.

Boilerplate

BOILERPLATE WAS UNVEILED IN 1893 BY PROFESSOR ARCHIBALD CAMPION (BELOW). BOILERPLATE WAS CREATED PRIMARILY FOR MILITARY DEFENCE IN THE HOPES THAT ONE DAY THESE MECHANICAL MEN WOULD PUT AN END TO CASUALTIES OF WAR. BOILERPLATE WENT ON CAMPAIGN TO DEMONSTRATE HIS VARIABLE DEFENSIVE FUNCTIONS, BASED UPON THE BELIEF THAT HE WOULD BE USEFUL IN 'RESOLVING THE CONFLICTS OF NATIONS.' IN THE WAR OF 1918, BOILERPLATE SERVED WITH ROOSEVELT'S ROUGH RIDERS AND FOUGHT ALONGSIDE PANCHO VILLA (BELOW). HOWEVER, IN 1918 BOILERPLATE BECAME A PART OF THE "LOST BATTALION", A MIX OF 550 MEN WHO BECAME SEPARATED FROM THE AMERICAN FIRST ARMY. IT WAS THOUGHT BOILERPLATE MIGHT HAVE BEEN DESTROYED BY A GERMAN SHELL, BUT THERE WAS NO FRAGMENTS OR TRACES OF SUCH AN EXPLOSION. SINCE THEN, THERE HAVE BEEN MANY THEORIES, AND SINCE HIS DISAPPEARANCE, THERE HAVE BEEN MANY PRESUMED SIGHTINGS OF BOILERPLATE, CENTERING IN CHICAGO.



BOILERPLATE AND ARCHIBALD CAMPION



BOILERPLATE WITH ROOSEVELT'S ROUGH RIDERS



DR. ANAKRON AND HIS TRANSPASMA PHOTON RIFLE

MECHANICAL MEN LIVE ON

SINCE THE FATEFUL MORNING WHEN MAN TOOK THE WHEEL TO WORK, AND THE FOLLOWING DAYS WHEN MAN EXPERIMENTED WITH CREATING A MECHANICAL COUNTERPART TO AID HIM IN DAILY LIFE, IN BATTLE, AND EVEN IN JOURNEYING THE COUNTRYSIDE QUICKLY AND COST-EFFECTIVELY, MAN HAS CONTINUED TO PUSH THE BOUNDARIES THAT SEPARATE MAN AND MACHINE. FOR TRULY, MAN IS A MACHINE!

CURRENTLY THERE ARE MANY OF THESE 'MECHANOID' INFILTRATING THE STEAMPUNK EMPIRE, MOVING AMONGST THE 'PURIST' HUMANS, AND LEARNING THEIR WAYS. IT HAS NOT BECOME SO UNCOMMON TO JOURNEY UNDERGROUND AND DISCOVER THE MAN SITTING NEXT TO YOU HAS A LIGHT BULB ENSCONCED IN HIS HEAD, WHICH IS A GREAT AID TO HIM WHILE HE READS IN THE GLOOMY SHADOWS. PERHAPS THE YOUNG LADY WALKING DOWN THE STREET HAD A MECHANICAL ARM, WHICH IS NO END OF ASSISTANCE WHEN A RUTHLESS CUTPURSE ASSAULTS HER, WHEREUPON SHE STEPS SMARTLY FORWARD TO RELIEVE HIM OF HIS BOOTY VIA THE SINISTRAL ASSISTING ARTICULATUS THAT SHOOTS A DAGGER FROM HER WRIST! WHAT BEGAN AS A SINGLE WHEEL HAS BECOME A SORT OF FEVER: THE MECHANICAL AGE...THE RISE OF THE MECHANOID! THIS REPORTER WAS FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO GAIN AN INTERVIEW WITH ONE OF THESE INDIVIDUALS.

DR. AVIUS ANAKON: MECHANOID

DR. AVIUS ANAKRON IS ONE OF THESE REMARKABLE, MECHANICAL INDIVIDUALS. HE IS THE INGENIOUS INVENTOR OF MANY MECHANICAL WONDERS, INCLUDING WEAPONS, ANDROIDS, AND MECHANICAL ATTACHMENTS DESIGNED TO ENHANCE/DEFEND THE HUMAN EXISTENCE. AS A MEMBER OF THE GUILD OF WEAPONSMITHS AND WEAPON ENGINEERS, AND THE SOCIETY OF GADGETEERS AND INVENTORS (S.G.I.) DR. ANAKRON BELIEVES THAT MANKIND WAS MEANT TO BE ENHANCED BY THE COMPLEX MECHANICAL CREATIONS OF SUCH CREATIVE MINDS. AT A TIME WHEN THE LEADING WORLD POWERS ARE INVESTIGATING ARTILLERY IN TERMS OF ENHANCING THE ART OF WARFARE, MEN AND WOMEN LIKE DR. ANAKRON ARE UTILIZING THEIR CONSIDERABLE SKILLS TO ENHANCE THE EVERY MAN'S DAILY LIFE. "WE HAVE NOT BEGUN TO TOUCH THE POTENTIAL OF MAN'S EXISTENCE," DR. AVIUS QUOTED, "OUR MINDS, OUR BODIES, THEIR TRUE CAPACITY HAS NOT YET BEEN FULLY EXPLORED. WHEN A SOLDIER LOSES HIS LEG IN BATTLE, WE STRAP ON AN APPARATUS TO HELP HIM WALK. THIS IS EVIDENCE THAT HUMANITY HAS A DEEP-SEATED INSTINCT TO UTILIZE MECHANICAL APPARATI TO COMPENSATE FOR ANY DEFICIENCIES, NATURAL OR UNNATURAL. ONE DAY, WE WILL HAVE MACHINES TO IMPROVE EYESIGHT, PERFECT HEARING, AND ENABLE HUMANS TO REACH BEYOND THE BOUNDS OF MERE PHYSICAL CAPABILITIES. THE CITIES OF THE FUTURE WILL BE VERY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT THEY ARE TODAY: EVERYTHING WILL HAVE BEEN UPGRADED. HORSE-DRAWN BUGGIES WILL BE REPLACED BY AIRSHIPS, RIFLES WILL BE REPLACED BY PARTICLE WEAPONS. I HAVE RECENTLY BEEN IN TALKS WITH A COLLEAGUE WHO HAS DEVELOPED A BREATHING APPARATUS THAT SHOULD IMPROVE LUNG CAPACITY BY UP TO TWENTY PERCENT! THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS! MANKIND IS HEADED TOWARDS THE NEXT STAGE OF THEIR EVOLUTION: THE MECHANICAL AGE. THOSE WHO OPPOSE THESE ENHANCEMENTS IN THE NAME OF RELIGION, OR THE "PURITY" OF THE HUMAN

FORM, ARE DENYING FUTURE GENERATIONS OF ALL OF THEIR POTENTIAL.

AS A NATURAL-BORN WEAPONS ENTHUSIAST, DR. ANAKRON HAS BUILT HIS IMPRESSIVE ARMOURY BY REPURPOSING AND UPCYCLING INDUSTRIAL REFUSE FOR DECADES. SOME OF HIS IMPRESSIVE "ENHANCEMENTS" ARE FEATURED HERE. MOST OF THESE DEVICES ARE REPUTEDLY INTENDED TO PERFECT THE HUMAN FORM, WITH A NOD TO THE DANGERS OF THE MODERN WORLD. "ANATRONIC ARACHNOIDS DO NOT KILL PEOPLE," DR. ANAKRON STATES, FIRMLY, "PEOPLE KILL PEOPLE."

DR. ANAKRON'S DEVICES HAVE MET WITH SOME RESISTANCE: THE TEMPERANCE LEAGUE HAS JOINED FORCES WITH A NUMBER OF RELIGIONS, PREACHING THE ABOLISHMENT OF 'DEMONIC DEVICES' WHICH 'CORRUPT THE SANCTITY OF THE HUMAN FORM.' WHILE NONE OF THESE STRICT INSTITUTIONS WOULD COMMENT ON DR. ANAKRON'S INVENTIONS, THE ANNUAL INVENTOR'S SYMPOSIUM, RECENTLY HELD IN NEW YORK CITY, ATTENDED BY THE WORLD'S LEADING SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS TO DISPLAY THEIR PROTOTYPES TO THEIR PEERS, WAS PICKETED BY ONE SUCH ORGANIZATION. THE SPOKESMAN FOR THE GROUP CLAIMED THAT DEVICES SUCH AS DR. ANAKRON'S ENCOURAGE VIOLENCE AND LAWLESSNESS IN WEAK INDIVIDUALS, AND TAKE MAN'S MIND AWAY FROM GOD. DR. ANAKRON IS NOT CONCERNED ABOUT THESE VARIOUS GROUPS, REFERRED TO BY HIM AS "PURISTS" OR "PURITANS". "IF ONE OF MY INVENTIONS ALLOWED A CRIPPLED CHILD TO WALK, WOULD THEY COMPLAIN? DID NOT JESUS BLESS THE LAME SO THEY COULD WALK, AND MAKE BLIND MEN SEE? NOT THAT I'M COMPARING MYSELF TO GOD, OF COURSE."

THIS REPORTER IS SOMEWHAT CONCERNED BY THE RUMOURS CIRCULATING AMONGST THE "MECHANOID" SET, OF AN UNDERGROUND MOVEMENT WHOSE GOAL IS TO ADVANCE THE PURPOSE OF THESE MECHANOID, IN THE NAME OF 'A BRIGHTER TOMORROW.' THIS REPORTER IS HOT ON THE TRAIL OF THESE, FOR LACK OF A BETTER WORD, "MECHANOID PATRIOTS". A SINGLE CLUE TO THEIR STRANGE UNDERGROUND SOCIETY HAS BEEN DISCOVERED. A SCRAWL ON A BACK ALLEY THAT HAS BEEN STUDIED AND AUTHENTICATED BY THE 'BLUEMANTLE PURSUIVANT OF ARMS IN ORDINARY,' A GENTLEMAN WHOSE RANK CLASSIFIES HIM AS A JUNIOR OFFICER OF ARMS OF THE COLLEGE OF ARMS IN LONDON.

ACCORDING TO THE EXPERT, THE "WHEEL" OR "GEAR" IS NOT A RECOGNIZED FEATURE IN HERALDRY. THIS COAT OF ARMS IS DEFINITELY A MODERN CREATION AND OFFICIALLY NOT CONSIDERED 'AUTHENTIC' BY THE MASTERS OF HERALDRY. THEREFORE, WE CAN ONLY GUESS AT ITS MEANING. SAVE FOR THE LATIN MOTTO BENEATH: DEUX EX MACHINA, MEANING "GOD FROM THE MACHINE." THIS REPORTER IS IN HOT PURSUIT OF THIS SECRET ORGANIZATION. ONLY ONE THING IS CERTAIN: WITH THE "PURISTS" OR "PURITANS" ON THE RIGHT, AND THESE MECHANOID REBELS ON THE LEFT, THE CITIZENS OF THE STEAMPUNK EMPIRE CAN DEPEND UPON PLENTY OF LIVELY CONTROVERSY FROM THESE TWO WARRING FACTIONS IN THE FUTURE.



THE SINISTRAL ASSISTING ARTICULATUS



THE ANATRONIC ARACHNOID DRONE



THE CRANIAL ZENITH AESTHETIC ENHANCEMENT DEVICE



The Aether Review Of Books

“A MATTER OF TEMPERANCE”

By ICHABOD TEMPERANCE

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CHAPTER 1 - ADVENTURE!

ICHABOD

THE RUMBLING PURR OF AN IMPOSSIBLY BIG CAT THRUMS THROUGH MY BODY. TITANIC ENGINES VIBRATE THIS COLOSSAL

SHIP. WHEELS, THE SIZE OF FOUR STORY BUILDINGS, MERCILESSLY PADDLE THE ATLANTIC OCEAN INTO SUBMISSION.

IT IS THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT; THE SHIP IS DARK AND QUIET. LYING ON THE DECK, I CAN FEEL THE DARK EXPANSE OF THE OCEAN DEPTHS SPREADING OUT BELOW, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME, I LOOK UP INTO A BRIGHT OCEAN OF STARS ABOVE. I FEEL AS IF I AM TUMBLING THROUGH THE AETHER OF SPACE, SWIMMING IN A CELESTIAL OCEAN.

AN OCEAN OF UNEXPECTED PHENOMENA.

THE REVELATORY COMET. THAT FATEFUL SUMMER OF 1869. IT HAS ONLY BEEN A SHORT FIVE AND A HALF YEARS SINCE THE EARTH PASSED THROUGH THE COMET'S TAIL.

ON THIS DAY, MARCH 16, 1875, THE WORLD IS A GREATLY CHANGED PLACE. IT WOULD SEEM THAT THE COMET HAD A STRANGE EFFECT ON OUR PLANET. EVERYWHERE ON EARTH, TENS OF THOUSANDS HAVE BECOME STRANGELY AFFECTED BY ITS PASSAGE. NOT ALL PEOPLE, BUT MANY, FIND THAT ANY NATURAL TALENT THEY POSSESSED HAS BEEN GREATLY ENHANCED. TINKERERS BEGAN TO SPROUT UP LIKE WILDFLOWERS IN SPRING. NOWADAYS, YOU CAN'T SWING A BUCKET WITHOUT HITTING SOME SORT OF TINKER, ENGINEER, MUSICIAN, ACTOR, ACROBAT OR DOCTOR OF UNUSUAL EXPERTISE. MOST DRUGGISTS HAVE A LABORATORY OF SOME SORT, WITH BUBBLING CAULDRONS, SMOKING THURIBLES, AND TANGLES OF COMPLICATED GLASS TUBING. EVERY BARBER HAS A WALL OF INCREDIBLE, IF A LITTLE FRIGHTENING, OVER-BUILT, ASSORTMENT OF GROOMING DEVICES. THESE DEMAND A GENTLEMAN OF STOUT WILL AND CONSTITUTION, TO HAVE THE TEMERITY TO GET A HAIRCUT. MUCH LESS A SHAVE!

FOR YEARS, THE POWER OF STEAM HAS BEEN HARNESSSED TO SERVE MAN'S INGENUITY. RAIL LINES SPREAD LIKE KUDZU ACROSS OUR LAND AND OTHERS, GIVING PLATFORMS FOR GREAT STEAM LOCOMOTIVES. BUT IN RECENT TIMES, THE POWER HAS BEEN TAPPED FOR MANY INVENTIONS, GREAT AND SMALL. STEAM-POWERED HORSELESS CARRIAGES ARE BECOMING MORE COMMONPLACE. A BLACKSMITH SHOP CAN, NOWADAYS, MANUFACTURE ALMOST ANYTHING THE MIND CAN CONCEIVE. ON OCCASION, A SMITH MAY EVEN BE ABLE TO BUILD A MECHANICAL HORSE, IF HE HAD BEEN MORE AFFECTED THAN MOST.

UNUSUAL DEVICES WITH WOUND SPRINGS, BRING INANIMATE OBJECTS TO LIFE. LARGE OBJECTS AND SMALL. FROM TINY, BUT INTRICATE, CLOCKWORK PLAYTHINGS, TO FULL SIZE, CLOCKWORK PEOPLE.

GYROSCOPIC ATTENUATORS MAINTAIN THE BALANCE OF THIS NEW BREED OF PERSON.

GREAT AIRSHIPS OF GRACE AND BEAUTY PLOW THE SKIES AROUND THE WORLD. AND IN SUCH

VARIETY! SINGLE OPERATOR BALLOONS, SMALL AND MEDIUM, SIZED BLIMPS. A CAPACITY FOR STEERING GRANTING THEM THE ALL IMPORTANT STATUS OF DIRIGIBLE. AND FINALLY, THE GARGANTUAN ZEPPELINS. THESE MAJESTIC CRAFTS PROUDLY SPREAD THE PRESTIGE OF THEIR HOME NATIONS. POWERFUL FLEETS RANGE THE SKIES. MANY COMMERCIAL CRAFTS HAVE ARISEN, AS WELL. EVEN GROUPS OF AIR PIRATES. IT IS A CHANGED WORLD, BUT STILL A VERY DANGEROUS ONE.

THEN WE HAVE THE MARVEL OF THE MAGNIFICENT SHIP I VOYAGE ON! THIS MIGHTY, EIGHT WHEELED, OCEAN PADDLER! MY GRACIOUS! WHAT A MIRACLE OF MAN'S ACHIEVEMENTS! IMAGINE A MISSISSIPPI RIVER BOAT, BUT GROWN TO FIFTY TIMES HER NORMAL SIZE. FOUR WHEELS ON EACH SIDE PROPEL THIS AMAZING SHIP EVER FORWARD. A HEAVY STEEL KEEL RUNS HER LENGTH. STEEL RIBS SUPPORT HER ENGINES AND DRIVE WHEELS, AMIDSHIPS. A SOL FURNACE POWERS THESE MAMMOTH ENGINES.

THE SOL FURNACE.

THE POWER OF THE SUN ITSELF, CAPTURED, AND HARNESSSED FOR THE USE OF MANKIND, BY PROFESSOR ST. JOHN ENTWHISTLE PLUMTARTT, AN EMINENT PHYSICIST (AND, IT IS REPUTED, AN INITIATE OF SEVERAL ARCANE ORDERS). BY A PROCESS THAT IS UNDERSTOOD BY ONLY A VERY FEW, HE HAS DEVELOPED A TECHNOLOGY CAPABLE OF GENERATING A SEEMINGLY ENDLESS SOURCE OF ENERGY.

THIS OCEAN PADDLER IS ON HER RETURN TRIP TO ENGLAND, COMPLETING HER MAID CRUISE. I FEEL A SPECIAL ATTACHMENT TO THIS SHIP, AND TO HER FURNACE. LITTLE OL' ME, ICHABOD TEMPERANCE, JUST AN ALABAMA KNOCKABOUT, COUNT MYSELF AS ONE OF THE MANY FROM AROUND THE WORLD AFFECTED BY THE REVELATORY COMET'S PASSING. I HAVE DEVELOPED QUITE A KNACK FOR DESIGN AND ENGINEERING SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS. ESPECIALLY GOGGLES. I CRAFTED A PAIR OF GOGGLES FOR PROFESSOR PLUMTARTT, HIMSELF, IN HIS WORK WITH THE DANGEROUS ELEMENTS INVOLVED WITH HIS MANUFACTURING PROCESS. THIS BROUGHT ME A BIT OF NOTORIETY, WHICH HAS LED TO OTHER COMMISSIONS.

THAT IS THE ERRAND I AM UPON NOW. MY MOST PRECIOUS INVENTION TO DATE. MY GOGGLES. PROFESSOR PLUMTARTT'S "ELEMENTAL PROTECTORS" GOT TO ENJOY THE OCEAN VOYAGE. THIS YEAR, I HAVE DECIDED TO NOT SEND MY MARVELOUS NEW GOGGLES TO MY ESTEEMED CLIENT. INSTEAD, I SHALL DELIVER THEM MYSELF! WHY SHOULD THEY HAVE ALL THE FUN? THE "BEAUTIES" ARE DESTINED FOR ADVENTURES IN DARKEST AFRICA. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE, I HAVE LEFT JEFFERSON COUNTY, ALABAMA, USA, TO CROSS THE ATLANTIC OCEAN, AND VISIT JOLLY OLD ENGLAND. A VISIT TO THE LEGENDARY CITY OF LONDON, HERSELF!

WHAT GREAT FUN THIS IS!

THIS IS THE GREATEST ADVENTURE I HAVE EVER KNOWN!

“STEAMPUNK RAT”

By MADELEINE HOLLY-ROISING

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INKER WOKE UP WITH JONATHAN GENTLY REMOVING HER FROM HER CUBBYHOLE. HE CUDDLED HER IN HIS ARM AS HE REACHED INTO HIS JACKET POCKET. "I GOT SOME MORE OF THOSE CRACKERS YOU LIKE." HE HANDED HER ONE AND SHE GREEDILY SNATCHED IT

ACCIDENTLY STABBING ONE OF HIS FINGERS WITH HER NEW HAND. "WHOA, DON'T TAKE MY FINGERS OFF." SHE CHITTERED NERVOUSLY, HORRIFIED THAT SHE MIGHT HAVE INJURED HIM.

"IT'S ALRIGHT, TINKER," HE KISSED THE TOP OF HER HEAD. "IT'S JUST A SCRATCH."

TINKER RUBBED HER HEAD AGAINST HIS JACKET AS HE STOOD IN FRONT OF THE THING WITH ALL THE TUNNELS AND CUBBYHOLES.

"I SEE YOU'VE DISCOVERED MY SECRET." JONATHAN PULLED THE REST OF THE CANVAS OFF TO REVEAL TO THE HUMAN EYE A CUTAWAY OF A PROTOTYPE STEAMSHIP. "THAT MY DEAR TINKER IS A REPLICA OF THE NEW FLAGSHIP OF OUR COMPANY. THE GS HYPATIA. ISN'T SHE BEAUTIFUL?" THE BOY GAZED PROUDLY AT IT. IT WAS ELEGANT IN DESIGN. SLEEK IN THE BOW SECTION, IT WIDENED A BIT AMIDSHIPS THEN TAPERED A BIT AT THE STERN. THE THREE FUNNELS WERE MADE OF COPPER TUBING AND WOOD AS WAS THE REST OF THE MODEL. THE CUTAWAY SECTION REVEALED FIVE DECKS BELOW THE TOP DECK. ONE COULD SEE THE PLACEMENT OF EVERYTHING FROM THE ENGINE ROOM TO THE CREW QUARTERS. A THIN COPPER TUBE RAN THROUGH THE CENTER OF THE SHIP FROM THE BRIDGE TO THE ENGINE ROOM.

TINKER THOUGHT IT WAS BEAUTIFUL TOO, BUT SHE SUSPECTED IT WAS FOR DIFFERENT REASONS THAN HER HUMAN KEEPER. TO HER IT WAS SNUG AND DRY AND HAD LOTS OF PLACES TO HIDE.

"YOU AND I ARE GOING TO CONSTRUCT A MODEL OF ITS INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEM. WITH SOME UPGRADES, OF COURSE. FOR FATHER'S BIRTHDAY. AND I HOPE IT'LL CONVINCED GRANDMOTHER THAT I SHOULD BE AN ENGINEER. HOW'S THAT LEG?" HE ASKED.

TINKER RESPONDED BY REACHING OUT AND PLUCKING A CRUMB OFF HIS LAPEL.

JONATHAN LAUGHED THEN POINTED TO THE COPPER TUBING. "YOU SEE THAT TUBE? I'M GOING TO WORK ON THAT PART AND TEACH YOU HOW TO HELP ME. HOW DOES THAT SOUND?"

TINKER CHITTERED THEN STOOD UP ON HER HIND LEGS IN JONATHAN'S HAND AND PATTED HIS FACE.

"I LOVE YOU TOO, TINKER. BUT YOU HAVE TO PROMISE ME ONE THING," JONATHAN GENTLY ADMONISHED HER. "YOU CAN ONLY GET INTO THE SHIP WHEN I'M HERE. NO OTHER TIME. AND YOU CAN NEVER LEAVE THIS ROOM WITHOUT ME. PROMISE?"

TINKER DIDN'T UNDERSTAND MUCH OF WHAT HE SAID, BUT SHE KNEW ONE THING FOR SURE. IT WOULD TAKE AN ARMY OF RATS TO KEEP HER FROM JONATHAN. SHE'D JUST HAVE TO DO WHAT RATS DO BEST - SNEAK.

The Aether Review Of Books

From The Editor

“A MATTER OF TEMPERANCE”

BY ICHABOD TEMPERANCE

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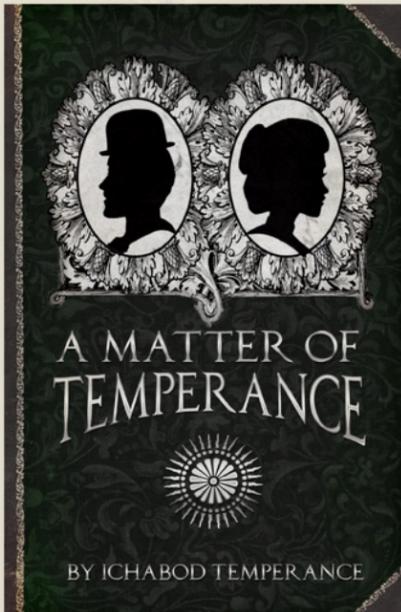
HE AUTHOR GOES TO A GREAT DEAL OF TROUBLE TO CREATE AN ALTERNATE WORLD. A WORLD WHERE INGENUITY AND INVENTIVENESS HAS ENRICHED THE WORLD, AND CHANGED THE FACE OF MANKIND. NEW

TECHNOLOGIES HAVE BEEN MADE AVAILABLE, SUCH AS AIRSHIPS AND OCEAN PADDLERS, CLOCKWORK PEOPLE AND MECHANICAL HORSES!

LONDON, EVER THE CENTRE OF THE STEAMPUNK WORLD, HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO A CLOCKWORK PARADISE!

OF COURSE, ST. PAUL'S, BUCKINGHAM PALACE, LONDON BRIDGE AND BIG BEN STILL REMAIN AS MAJOR LANDMARKS, BUT THEY ARE OFFSET BY ELEVATED RAILWAYS CONNECTING IMPORTANT BUILDINGS, AND MOORING TOWERS THAT ARE SERVICED BY AIRSHIPS. LONDON HAS BECOME A WORLD WHERE “MODERN MARVELS INSINUATE THEMSELVES INTO THE FABRIC OF BUSY LIFE.” STEAM-POWERED, LAND LOCOMOTIVES TRAVERSE THE STREETS, AND MECHANICAL HORSES TRANSPORT THEIR OWNERS TO A FRO. BUT THE STRANGEST AND MOST STRIKING SIGHT OF ALL? AN AURIENTAL RIKSHAW: A CLOCKWORK PERSON! THIS PARALLEL LONDON HAS UNDERGONE A SOCIOECONOMIC PARADIGM SHIFT. BANKERS AND FINANCIERS ARE NO LONGER THE TYCOONS OF WALL STREET. THIS NEW LONDON GLORIFIES ENGINEERS AND PHYSICISTS, TINKERERS AND CLOCKWORK ARTIFICERS. IT'S A WORLD OF SENSATIONAL FASHIONS, PEACOCK PLUMES AND SHAPELY BUSTLES, FANS, PARASOLS, AND HANDKERCHIEFS. THIS PARALLEL LONDON IS ALSO HOME TO A SPECIES OF GENTLEMAN DANDY THAT HAS SPRUNG FROM THE PRIVILEGE AND OPPORTUNITY THAT PARALLEL LONDON HAS TO OFFER ITS CITIZENS; A WORLD WHERE “SELF-TIPPING HATS SEEM TO BE VERY POPULAR THIS YEAR.”

THE WORLD THE AUTHOR HAS CREATED IS RIFE WITH ADVENTURE AND THE JOY OF DISCOVERY. HOWEVER, IT ALSO SEEMS TO BE HOME TO AN UNNAMED EVIL, WHICH IS BROUGHT FORWARD IN CHAPTER 2. “EVIL FORCES ARE AT LOOSE IN OUR FAIR LAND,” ONE PERSEPHONE BELIEVES. “A MATTER OF TEMPERANCE” SEEMS TO PRESENT THIS ALTERNATE LONDON WITH TWO FACES: ONE LIGHT, ONE DARK. ONE BESTOWS THE GIFTS OF INGENUITY UNTO THE WORLD, AND THE OTHER THAT EXACTS THE PRICE FOR THESE ADVANCEMENTS, SEEMINGLY, AT RANDOM. THE AUTHOR HINTS AT DARKER, OCCULT FORCES IN



HIS NARRATIVE: SOME OF THESE MIRACULOUS INVENTIONS AND MECHANICAL WONDERS MIGHT BE POWERED BY MORE THAN HUMAN AMBITION. THE SUPPOSITION THAT THE CITIZENS OF THIS ALTERNATE LONDON WILL HAVE TO DRAW ON DEEPER RESERVES TO COMBAT THESE BURGEONING EVILS PRESENTS THE POTENTIAL FOR AN INTERESTING TWIST TO THE STANDARD DICHOTOMY OF MAN VS. MACHINE. WITH A SCOURGE THREATENING BRITAIN, AND THE PEACE OF THIS ALTERNATE LONDON, THE MAIN CHARACTER ICHABOD AND THE HEROINE PERSEPHONE MUST ENDEAVOUR TO OVERCOME THIS NEW THREAT THAT HAS BEEN UNLEASHED UPON THEIR BRIGHT NEW WORLD.

“A MATTER OF TEMPERANCE” BY ICHABOD TEMPERANCE IS AVAILABLE TO OWN ON AMAZON.COM, KINDLE EDITION. IN OUR NEXT EDITION, WE WILL BE INTERVIEWING THE AUTHOR ON THE SUBJECT OF HIS WRITTEN WORKS, AND ANTICIPATING THE NEXT CHAPTER OF HIS LATEST BOOK: “FOR THE LOVE OF TEMPERANCE.”

“STEAMPUNK RAT”

BY MADELEINE HOLLY-ROISING

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HE STORY OF TINKER (THE STEAMPUNK RAT) AND HER HUMAN KEEPER JONATHON IS FULL OF INGENUITY (THE LEAST I WOULD EXPECT OF ANY STEAMPUNK NOVELLA) AND A LOT OF HEART. THE NOTION THAT TINKER OWES

EVERYTHING TO JONATHON (WHO RESCUED HER AND IN ORDER TO REPAIR HER INJURIES, TRANSFORMED HER INTO A “MECHONOID-RAT”) AND WHAT JONATHON WANTS MOST IS TO DEFY HIS FAMILY'S WISHES, CREATES AN INTERESTING DYNAMIC BETWEEN THESE TWO PROTAGONISTS. TINKER IS PORTRAYED WITH A VERY HIGH LEVEL OF INTELLIGENCE, BUT A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING. THE PERSPECTIVE FROM

WHICH A RAT VIEWS THE HUMAN WORLD IN THE CONTEXT OF STEAMPUNK RAT IS CHIEFLY CONFUSION. WHILE SHE DOESN'T REALLY UNDERSTAND THE THINGS THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO JONATHON, OR WHY THEY ARE IMPORTANT. THE SIMPLE FACT THAT THEY ARE IMPORTANT TO JONATHON IS ENOUGH FOR TINKER TO MAKE THOSE THINGS IMPORTANT TO HER! IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE HOW THE CHARACTER OF TINKER DEVELOPS. JONATHON SEEMS A GENIALLY AFFABLE SORT, BUT IN A STRUGGLE WITH HIS FAMILY OVER THE LACK OF RANK AND STATUS BESTOWED UPON THE WORKING TRADES, DESPITE THE FACT THAT IN THE STEAMPUNK WORLD, AN ENGINEER IS ONLY SOMEWHAT LESSER THAN A GOD. NEVERTHELESS, JONATHON IS DENIED HIS TRUE CALLING BY HIS FAMILY, AND MUST BE CONTENT WITH WORKING ON HIS GENIUS PROJECTS IN SECRET, WITH TINKER'S HELP. NO DOUBT A GRAND ADVENTURE WILL UNFOLD FOR THESE TWO UNLIKELY HEROES, AND SHOULD YOUNG JONATHON RECEIVE THE ACCOLADES HE WILL COME TO DESERVE ONCE HIS SECRET PROJECTS ARE COMPLETE, I WOULD LOVE TO SEE HOW THE STEAMPUNK WORLD VIEWS THE NOTION OF A STEAMPUNK RAT. I'M NOT SURE SOMETHING LIKE THAT WOULD NECESSARILY GO OVER WELL IN UPPER-SET IN LONDON, WHERE CERTAINLY RATS ARE PLENTIFUL, BUT RARELY MECHANIZED AND/OR WANTED CREATURES. TINKER, OBVIOUSLY, WILL BE THE EXCEPTION.

“STEAMPUNK RAT” HAS BEEN NOMINATED FOR A 2013 STEAMPUNK CHRONICLE READER'S CHOICE AWARD, STEAMPUNK RAT IS A YA NOVELLA BASED ON THE STEAMPUNK WEBCOMIC BOSTON METAPHYSICAL SOCIETY. (BOSTONMETAPHYSICALSOCIETY.COM)



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.