A FALL OF GLASS

The weatherman was always right: Temperature, 59; humidity, 47%; occasional light showers — but of what?

By STANLEY R. LEE

Illustrated by DILLON

THE pockets of Mr. Humphrey Fownes were being picked outrageously.

It was a splendid day. The temperature was a crisp 59 degrees, the humidity a mildly dessicated 47%. The sun was a flaming orange ball in a cloudless blue sky.

His pockets were picked eleven times.

It should have been difficult. Under the circumstances it was a masterpiece of pocket picking. What made it possible was Humphrey Fownes' abstraction; he was an uncommonly preoccupied individual. He was strolling along a quiet residential avenue: small private houses, one after another, a place of little traffic and minimum distrac-

tions. But he was thinking about weather, which was an unusual subject to begin with for a person living in a domed city. He was thinking so deeply about it that it never occurred to him that entirely too many people were bumping into him. He was thinking about Optimum Dome Conditions (a crisp 59 degrees, a mildly dessicated 47%) when a bogus postman, who pretended to be reading a postal card, jostled him. In the confusion of spilled letters and apologies from both sides, the postman rifled Fownes's handkerchief and inside jacket pockets.

HE was still thinking about temperature and humidity when a pretty girl happened along with something in her eye. They collided. She got his right and left jacket pockets. It was much too much for coincidence. The sidewalk was wide enough to allow four people to pass at one time. He should surely have become suspicious when two men engaged in a heated argument came along. In the ensuing contretemps they emptied his rear pants pockets, got his wristwatch and restored the contents of the handkerchief pocket. It all went off very smoothly, like a game of put and take — the sole difference being that Humphrey Fownes had no idea he was playing.

There was an occasional tinkle of falling glass.

It fell on the streets and houses, making small geysers of shiny mist, hitting with a gentle musical sound, like the ephemeral droppings of a celesta. It was precipitation peculiar to a dome: feather-light fragments showering harmlessly on the city from time to time. Dome weevils, their metal arms reaching out with molten glass, roamed the huge casserole, ceaselessly patching and repairing.

Humphrey Fownes strode through the puffs of falling glass still intrigued by a temperature that was always 59 degrees, by a humidity that was always 47%, by weather that was always Optimum. It was this rather than skill that enabled the police to maintain such a tight surveillance on him, a surveillance that went to the extent of getting his fingerprints off the postman's bag, and which photographed, X-rayed and chemically analyzed the contents of his pockets before returning them. Two blocks away from his home a careless housewife spilled a five-pound bag of flour as he was passing. It was really plaster of Paris. He left his shoe prints, stride measurement, height, weight and handedness behind.

By the time Fownes reached his front door an entire dossier complete with photographs had been prepared and was being read by two men in an orange patrol car parked down the street.

LANFIERRE had undoubtedly been affected by his job.

Sitting behind the wheel of the orange car, he watched Humphrey Fownes approach with a distinct feeling of admiration, although it was an odd, objective kind of admiration, clinical in nature. It was similar to that of a pathologist observing for the first time a new and particularly virulent strain of pneumococcus under his microscope.

Lanfierre's job was to ferret out aberration. It couldn't be tolerated within the confines of a dome. Conformity had become more than a social force; it was a physical necessity. And, after years of working at it, Lanfierre had become an admirer of eccentricity. He came to see that genuine quirks were rare and, as time went on, due partly to his own small efforts, rarer.

Fownes was a masterpiece of queerness. He was utterly inexplicable. Lanfierre was almost proud of Humphrey Fownes.

"Sometimes his house *shakes,*" Lanfierre said.

"House shakes," Lieutenant MacBride wrote in his notebook. Then he stopped and frowned. He reread what he'd just written.

"You heard right. The house *shakes,*" Lanfierre said, savoring it.

MacBride looked at the Fownes house through the magnifying glass of the windshield. "Like from . . . *side to side?*" he asked in a somewhat patronizing tone of voice.

"And up and down."

MacBride returned the notebook to the breast pocket of his orange uniform. "Go on," he said, amused. "It sounds interesting." He tossed the dossier carelessly on the back seat.

Lanfierre sat stiffly behind the wheel, affronted. The cynical MacBride couldn't really appreciate fine aberrations. In some ways MacBride was a barbarian. Lanfierre had held out on Fownes for months. He had even contrived to engage him in conversation once, a pleasantly absurd, irrational little chat that titillated him for weeks. It was only with the greatest reluctance that he finally mentioned Fownes to MacBride. After years of searching for differences Lanfierre had seen how extraordinarily repetitious people were, echoes really, dimly resounding echoes, each believing itself whole and separate. They spoke in an incessant chatter of cliches, and their actions were unbelievably trite.

Then a fine robust freak came along and the others — the echoes — refused to believe it. The lieutenant was probably on the point of suggesting a vacation.

"Why don't you take a vacation?" Lieutenant MacBride suggested.

"It's like this, MacBride. Do you know what a wind is? A breeze? A zephyr?"

"I've heard some."

"They say there are mountaintops where winds blow all the time. Strong winds, MacBride. Winds like you and I can't imagine. And if there was a house sitting on such a mountain and if winds *did* blow, it would shake exactly the way that one does. Sometimes I get the feeling the whole place is going to slide off its foundation and go sailing down the avenue."

LIEUTENANT MacBride pursed his lips.

"I'll tell you something else," Lanfierre went on. "The *windows* all close at the same time. You'll be watching and all of a sudden every single window in the place will drop to its sill." Lanfierre leaned back in the seat, his eyes still on the house. "Sometimes I think there's a whole crowd of people in there waiting for a signal — as if they all had something important to say but had to close the windows first so no one could hear. Why else close the windows in a domed city? And then as soon as the place is buttoned up they all explode into conversation—and that's why the house shakes."

MacBride whistled.

"No, I don't need a vacation."

A falling piece of glass dissolved into a puff of gossamer against the windshield. Lanfierre started and bumped his knee on the steering wheel.

"No, you don't need a rest," MacBride said. "You're starting to see flying houses, hear loud babbling voices. You've got winds in your brain, Lanfierre, breezes of fatigue, zephyrs of irrationality—"

At that moment, all at once, every last window in the house slammed shut.

The street was deserted and quiet, not a movement, not a sound. MacBride and Lanfierre both leaned forward, as if waiting for the ghostly babble of voices to commence.

The house began to shake.

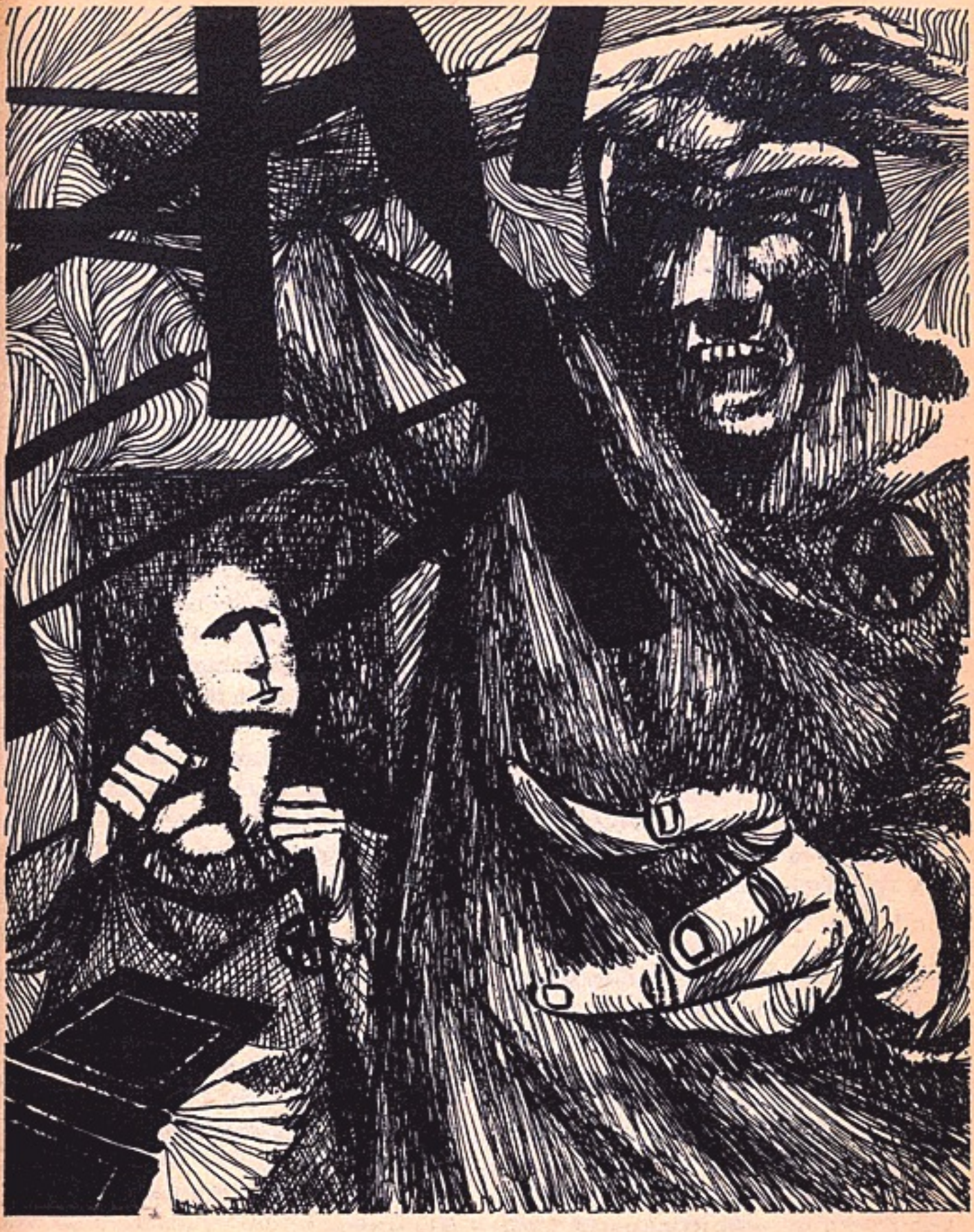
It rocked from side to side, it pitched forward and back, it yawed and dipped and twisted, straining at the mooring of its foundation. The house could have been preparing to take off and sail down the . . .

MacBride looked at Lanfierre and Lanfierre looked at MacBride and then they both looked back at the dancing house.

"And the *water*," Lanfierre said. "The *water* he uses! He could be the thirstiest and cleanest man in the city. He could have a whole family of thirsty and clean kids, and he *still* wouldn't need all that water."

The lieutenant had picked up the dossier. He thumbed through the pages now in amazement. "Where do you get a guy like this?" he asked. "Did you see what he carries in his pockets?"

"And compasses won't work on this street."



The lieutenant lit a cigarette and sighed.

He usually sighed when making the decision to raid a dwelling. It expressed his weariness and distaste for people who went off and got neurotic when they could be enjoying a happy, normal existence. There was something implacable about his sighs.

"He'll be coming out soon," Lanfierre said. "He eats supper next door with a widow. Then he goes to the library. Always the same. Supper at the widow's next door and then the library."

MacBride's eyebrows went up a fraction of an inch. "The library?" he said. "Is he in with that bunch?"

Lanfierre nodded.

"Should be very interesting," MacBride said slowly.

"I can't wait to see what he's got in there," Lanfierre murmured, watching the house with a consuming interest.

They sat there smoking in silence and every now and then their eyes widened as the house danced a new step.

FOWNES stopped on the porch to brush the plaster of paris off his shoes. He hadn't seen the patrol car and this intense preoccupation of his was also responsible for the dancing house—he simply hadn't noticed. There was a certain amount of vibration, of course. He had a bootleg pipe connected into the dome blower system, and the high-pressure air caused some buffeting against the thin walls of the house. At least, he called it buffeting; he'd never thought to watch from outside.

He went in and threw his jacket on the sofa, there being no room left in the closets. Crossing the living room he stopped to twist a draw-pull.

Every window slammed shut.

"Tight as a kite," he thought, satisfied. He continued on toward the closet at the foot of the stairs and then stopped again. Was that right? No, *snug as a hug in a rug.* He went on, thinking: *The old devils.*

The downstairs closet was like a great watch case, a profusion of wheels surrounding the Master Mechanism, which was a miniature see-saw that went back and forth 365¼ times an hour. The wheels had a curious stateliness about them. They were all quite old, salvaged from grandfather's clocks and music boxes and they went around in graceful circles at the rate of 30 and 31 times an hour . . . although there was one slightly eccentric cam that vacillated between 28 and 29. He watched as they spun and flashed in the darkness, and then set them for seven o'clock in the evening, April seventh, any year.

Outside, the domed city vanished.

It was replaced by an illusion. Or, as Fownes hoped it might appear, the illusion of the domed city vanished and was replaced by a more satisfactory, and, for his specific purpose, more functional, illusion. Looking through the window he saw only a garden.

Instead of an orange sun at perpetual high noon, there was a red sun setting brilliantly, marred only by an occasional arcover which left the smell of ozone in the air. There was also a gigantic moon. It hid a huge area of sky, and it sang. The sun and moon both looked down upon a garden that was itself scintillant, composed largely of neon roses.

Moonlight, he thought, and roses. Satisfactory. *And cocktails for two.* Blast, he'd never be able to figure that one out! He watched as the moon played, *Oh, You Beautiful Doll* and the neon roses flashed slowly from red to violet, then went back to the closet and turned on the scent. The house began to smell like an immensely concentrated rose as the moon shifted to *People Will Say We're In Love.*

HE rubbed his chin critically. It *seemed* all right. A dreamy sunset, an enchanted moon, flowers, scent.

They were all purely speculative of course. He had no idea how a rose really smelled — or looked for that matter. Not to mention a moon. But then, neither did the widow. He'd have to be confident, assertive. *Insist* on it. I tell you, my dear, this is a genuine realistic romantic moon. Now, does it do anything to your pulse? Do you feel icy fingers marching up and down your spine?

His own spine didn't seem to be affected. But then he hadn't read that book on ancient mores and courtship customs.

How really odd the ancients were. Seduction seemed to be an incredibly long and drawn-out process, accompanied by a considerable amount of falsification. Communication seemed virtually impossible. "No" meant any number of things, depending on the tone of voice and the circumstances. It could mean yes, it could mean ask me again later on this evening.

He went up the stairs to the bedroom closet and tried the rainmaker, thinking roguishly: *Thou shalt not inundate.* The risks he was taking! A shower fell gently on the garden and a male chorus began to chant *Singing in the Rain.* Undiminished, the yellow moon and the red sun continued to be brilliant, although the sun occasionally arced over and demolished several of the neon roses.

The last wheel in the bedroom closet was a rather elegant steering wheel from an old 1995 Studebaker. This was on the bootleg pipe; he gingerly turned it.

Far below in the cellar there was a rumble and then the soft whistle of winds came to him.

He went downstairs to watch out the living room window. This was important; the window had a really fixed attitude about air currents. The neon roses bent and tinkled against each other as the wind rose and the moon shook a trifle as it whispered *Cuddle Up a Little Closer.*

He watched with folded arms, considering how he would start. *My dear Mrs. Deshazaway.* Too formal. They'd be looking out at the romantic garden; time to be a bit forward. *My very dear Mrs. Deshazaway.* No. Contrived. How about a simple, *Dear Mrs. Deshazaway.* That might be it. *I was wondering, seeing as how it's so late, if you wouldn't rather stay over instead of going home . . .*

Preoccupied, he hadn't noticed the winds building up, didn't hear the shaking and rattling of the pipes. There were attic pipes connected to wall pipes and wall pipes connected to cellar pipes, and they made one gigantic skeleton that began to rattle its bones and dance as high-pressure air from the dome blower rushed in, slowly opening the Studebaker valve wider and wider . . .

The neon roses thrashed about, extinguishing each other. The red sun shot off a mass of sparks and then quickly sank out of sight. The moon fell on the garden and rolled ponderously along, crooning *When the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day.*

The shaking house finally woke him up. He scrambled upstairs to the Studebaker wheel and shut it off.

At the window again, he sighed. Repairs were in order. And it wasn't the first time the winds got out of line.

Why didn't she marry him and save all this bother? He shut it all down and went out the front door, wondering about the rhyme of the months, about stately August and eccentric February and romantic April. April. Its days were thirty and it followed September. *And all the rest have thirty-one.* What a strange people, the ancients!

He still didn't see the orange car parked down the street.

"MEN are too perishable," Mrs. Deshazaway said over dinner. "For all practical purposes I'm never going to marry again. All my husbands die."

"Would you pass the beets, please?" Humphrey Fownes said.

She handed him a platter of steaming red beets. "And don't look at me that way," she said. "I'm *not* going to marry you and if you want reasons I'll give you four of them. Andrew. Curt. Norman. And Alphonse."

The widow was a passionate wo-

man. She did everything passionately — talking, cooking, dressing. Her beets were passionately red. Her clothes rustled and her high heels clicked and her jewelry tinkled. She was possessed by an uncontrollable dynamism. Fownes had never known anyone like her. "You forgot to put salt on the potatoes," she said passionately, then went on as calmly as it was possible for her to be, to explain why she couldn't marry him. "Do you have any idea what people are saying? They're all saying I'm a cannibal! I rob my husbands of their life force and when they're empty I carry their bodies outside on my way to the justice of the peace."

"As long as there are people," he said philosophically, "there'll be talk."

"But it's the air! Why don't they talk about that? The air is stale, I'm positive. It's not nourishing. The air is stale and Andrew, Curt, Norman and Alphonse couldn't stand it. Poor Alphonse. He was never so healthy as on the day he was born. From then on things got steadily worse for him."

"I don't seem to mind the air."

She threw up her hands. "You'd be the worst of the lot!" She left the table, rustling and tinkling about the room. "I can just hear them. Try some of the asparagus. *Five.* That's what they'd say. That woman did it again. And the plain fact is I don't want you on my record.

"Really," Fownes protested. "I feel splendid. Never better."

He could hear her moving about and then felt her hands on his shoulders. "And what about those *very* elaborate plans you've been making to seduce me?"

Fownes froze with three asparagus hanging from his fork.

"Don't you think *they'll* find out? *I* found out and you can bet *they* will. It's my fault, I guess. I talk too much. And I don't always tell the truth. To be completely honest with you, Mr. Fownes, it wasn't the old customs at all standing between us, it was air. I can't have another man die on me, it's bad for my self-esteem. And now you've gone and done something good and criminal, something peculiar."

FOWNES put his fork down. "Dear Mrs. Deshazaway," he started to say.

"And of course when they do find out and they ask you why, Mr. Fownes, you'll tell them. No, no heroics, please! When they ask a man a question he always answers and you will too. You'll tell them I wanted to be courted and when they hear that they'll be around to ask *me* a few questions. You see, we're both a bit queer."

"I hadn't thought of that," Fownes said quietly.

"Oh, it doesn't really matter. I'll join Andrew, Curt, Norman —"

"That won't be necessary,"

Fownes said with unusual force. "With all due respect to Andrew, Curt, Norman and Alphonse, I might as well state here and now I have other plans for you, Mrs. Deshazaway."

"But my dear Mr. Fownes," she said, leaning across the table. "We're lost, you and I."

"Not if we could leave the dome," Fownes said quietly.

"That's impossible! How?"

In no hurry, now that he had the widow's complete attention, Fownes leaned across the table and whispered: "Fresh air, Mrs. Deshazaway? Space? Miles and miles of space where the real-estate monopoly has no control whatever? Where the *wind* blows across *prairies;* or is it the other way around? No matter. How would you like *that,* Mrs. Deshazaway?"

Breathing somewhat faster than usual, the widow rested her chin on her two hands. "Pray continue," she said.

"Endless vistas of moonlight and roses? April showers, Mrs. Deshazaway. And June, which as you may know follows directly upon April and is supposed to be the month of brides, of marrying. June also lies beyond the dome."

"I see."

"And," Mr. Fownes added, his voice a honeyed whisper, "they say that somewhere out in the space and the roses and the moonlight, the sleeping equinox yawns and rises because on a certain day it's *vernal* and that's when it roams the Open Country where geigers no longer scintillate."

"My." Mrs. Deshazaway rose, paced slowly to the window and then came back to the table, standing directly over Fownes. "If you can get us outside the dome," she said, "out where a man stays *warm* long enough for his wife to get to know him . . . if you can do that, Mr. Fownes . . . you may call me Agnes."

WHEN Humphrey Fownes stepped out of the widow's house, there was a look of such intense abstraction on his features that Lanfierre felt a wistful desire to get out of the car and walk along with the man. It would be such a *deliciously* insane experience. ("April has thirty days," Fownes mumbled, passing them, "because thirty is the largest number such that all smaller numbers not having a common divisor with it are *primes.*" MacBride frowned and added it to the dossier. Lanfierre sighed.)

Pinning his hopes on the Movement, Fownes went straight to the library several blocks away, a shattered depressing place given over to government publications and censored old books with holes in them. It was used so infrequently that the Movement was able to meet there undisturbed. The librarian was a yellowed, dog-eared

woman of eighty. She spent her days reading ancient library cards and, like the books around her, had been rendered by time's own censor into near unintelligibility.

"Here's one," she said to him as he entered. *"Gulliver's Travels.* Loaned to John Wesley Davidson on March 14, 1979 for *five* days. What do you make of it?"

In the litter of books and cards and dried out ink pads that surrounded the librarian, Fownes noticed a torn dust jacket with a curious illustration. "What's that?" he said.

"A twister," she replied quickly. "Now listen to *this.* Seven years later on March 21, 1986, Ella Marshall Davidson took out the same book. What do you make of *that?*"

"I'd say," Humphrey Fownes said, "that he . . . that he recommended it to her, that one day they met in the street and he told her about this book and then they . . . they went to the library together and she borrowed it and eventually, why eventually they got married."

"Hah! They were brother and sister!" the librarian shouted in her parched voice, her old buckram eyes laughing with cunning.

Fownes smiled weakly and looked again at the dust jacket. The twister was unquestionably a meteorological phenomenon. It spun ominously, like a malevolent top, and coursed the countryside destructively, carrying a Dorothy to an Oz. He couldn't help wondering if twisters did anything to feminine pulses, if they could possibly be a part of a moonlit night, with cocktails and roses. He absently stuffed the dust jacket in his pocket and went on into the other rooms, the librarian mumbling after him: "Edna Murdoch Featherstone, April 21, 1991," as though reading inscriptions on a tombstone.

THE Movement met in what had been the children's room, where unpaid ladies of the afternoon had once upon a time read stories to other people's offspring. The members sat around at the miniature tables looking oddly like giants fled from their fairy tales, protesting.

"Where did the old society fail?" the leader was demanding of them. He stood in the center of the room, leaning on a heavy knobbed cane. He glanced around at the group almost complacently, and waited as Humphrey Fownes squeezed into an empty chair. "We live in a dome," the leader said, "for lack of something. An invention! What is the one thing that the great technological societies before ours could not invent, notwithstanding their various giant brains, electronic and otherwise?"

Fownes was the kind of man who never answered a rhetorical question. He waited, uncomfortable in

the tight chair, while the others struggled with this problem in revolutionary dialectics.

"A sound foreign policy," the leader said, aware that no one else had obtained the insight. "If a sound foreign policy can't be created the only alternative is not to have any foreign policy at all. Thus the movement into domes began — *by common consent of the governments.* This is known as self-containment."

Dialectically out in left field, Humphrey Fownes waited for a lull in the ensuing discussion and then politely inquired how it might be arranged for him to get out.

"Out?" the leader said, frowning. "Out? Out where?"

"Outside the dome."

"Oh. All in good time, my friend. One day we shall all pick up and leave."

"And that day I'll await impatiently," Fownes replied with marvelous tact, "because it will be lonely out there for the two of us. My future wife and I have to leave *now.*"

"Nonsense. Ridiculous! You have to be prepared for the Open Country. You can't just up and leave, it would be suicide, Fownes. And dialectically very poor."

"Then you *have* discussed preparations, the practical necessities of life in the Open Country. Food, clothing, a weapon perhaps? What else? Have I left anything out?"

The leader sighed. "The gentleman wants to know if he's left anything out," he said to the group.

Fownes looked around at them, at some dozen pained expressions.

"Tell the man what he's forgotten," the leader said, walking to the far window and turning his back quite pointedly on them.

Everyone spoke at the same moment. *"A sound foreign policy,"* they all said, it being almost too obvious for words.

ON his way out the librarian shouted at him: *"A Tale of a Tub,* thirty-five years overdue!" She was calculating the fine as he closed the door.

Humphrey Fownes' preoccupation finally came to an end when he was one block away from his house. It was then that he realized something unusual must have occurred. An orange patrol car of the security police was parked at his front door. And something else was happening too.

His house was dancing.

It was disconcerting, and at the same time enchanting, to watch one's residence frisking about on its foundation. It was such a strange sight that for the moment he didn't give a thought to what might be causing it. But when he stepped gingerly onto the porch, which was doing its own independent gavotte, he reached for the doorknob with an immense curiosity.

The door flung itself open and knocked him back off the porch.

From a prone position on his miniscule front lawn, Fownes watched as his favorite easy chair sailed out of the living room on a blast of cold air and went pinwheeling down the avenue in the bright sunshine. A wild wind and a thick fog poured out of the house. It brought chairs, suits, small tables, lamps trailing their cords, ashtrays, sofa cushions. The house was emptying itself fiercely, as if disgorging an old, spoiled meal. From deep inside he could hear the rumble of his ancient upright piano as it rolled ponderously from room to room.

He stood up; a wet wind swept over him, whipping at his face, toying with his hair. It was a whistling in his ears, and a tingle on his cheeks. He got hit by a shoe.

As he forced his way back to the doorway needles of rain played over his face and he heard a voice cry out from somewhere in the living room.

"Help!" Lieutenant MacBride called.

Standing in the doorway with his wet hair plastered down on his dripping scalp, the wind roaring about him, the piano rumbling in the distance like thunder, Humphrey Fownes suddenly saw it all very clearly.

"Winds," he said in a whisper.

"What's happening?" MacBride yelled, crouching behind the sofa.

"March winds," he said.

"What?!"

"April showers!"

The winds roared for a moment and then MacBride's lost voice emerged from the blackness of the living room. "These are *not* Optimum Dome Conditions!" the voice wailed. "The temperature is *not* 59 degrees. The humidity is *not* 47%!"

FOWNES held his face up to let the rain fall on it. "Moonlight!" he shouted. "Roses! My *soul* for a cocktail for two!" He grasped the doorway to keep from being blown out of the house.

"Are you going to make it stop or aren't you!" MacBride yelled.

"You'll have to tell me what you did first!"

"I *told* him not to touch that wheel! Lanfierre. He's in the upstairs bedroom!"

When he heard this Fownes plunged into the house and fought his way up the stairs. He found Lanfierre standing outside the bedroom with a wheel in his hand.

"What have I done?" Lanfierre asked in the monotone of shock.

Fownes took the wheel. It was off a 1995 Studebaker.

"I'm not sure what's going to come of this," he said to Lanfierre with an astonishing amount of objectivity, "but the entire dome air supply is now coming through my bedroom."

The wind screamed.

"Is there something I can turn?" Lanfierre asked.

"Not any more there isn't."

They started down the stairs carefully, but the wind caught them and they quickly reached the bottom in a wet heap.

Recruiting Lieutenant MacBride from behind his sofa, the men carefully edged out of the house and forced the front door shut.

The wind died. The fog dispersed. They stood dripping in the Optimum Dome Conditions of the bright avenue.

"I never figured on *this*," Lanfierre said, shaking his head

With the front door closed the wind quickly built up inside the house. They could see the furnishing whirl past the windows. The house did a wild, elated jig.

"What kind of a place *is* this?" MacBride said, his courage beginning to return. He took out his notebook but it was a soggy mess. He tossed it away.

"Sure, he was *different*," Lanfierre murmured. "I knew that much."

When the roof blew off they weren't really surprised. With a certain amount of equanimity they watched it lift off almost gracefully, standing on end for a moment before toppling to the ground. It was strangely slow motion, as was the black twirling cloud that now rose out of the master bedroom, spewing shorts and socks and pillow cases every which way.

"*Now* what?" MacBride said, thoroughly exasperated, as this strange black cloud began to accelerate, whirling about like some malevolent top . . .

HUMPHREY Fownes took out the dust jacket he'd found in the library. He held it up and carefully compared the spinning cloud in his bedroom with the illustration. The cloud rose and spun, assuming the identical shape of the illustration.

"It's a twister," he said softly. "A Kansas twister!"

"What," MacBride asked, his bravado slipping away again, "what . . . is a twister?"

The twister roared and moved out of the bedroom, out over the rear of the house toward the side of the dome. "It says here," Fownes shouted over the roaring, "that Dorothy traveled from Kansas to Oz in a twister and that . . . and that Oz is a wonderful and mysterious land *beyond the confines of everyday living.*"

MacBride's eyes and mouth were great zeros.

"Is there something I can turn?" Lanfierre asked.

Huge chunks of glass began to fall around them.

"Fownes!" MacBride shouted. "This is a direct order! Make it go back!"

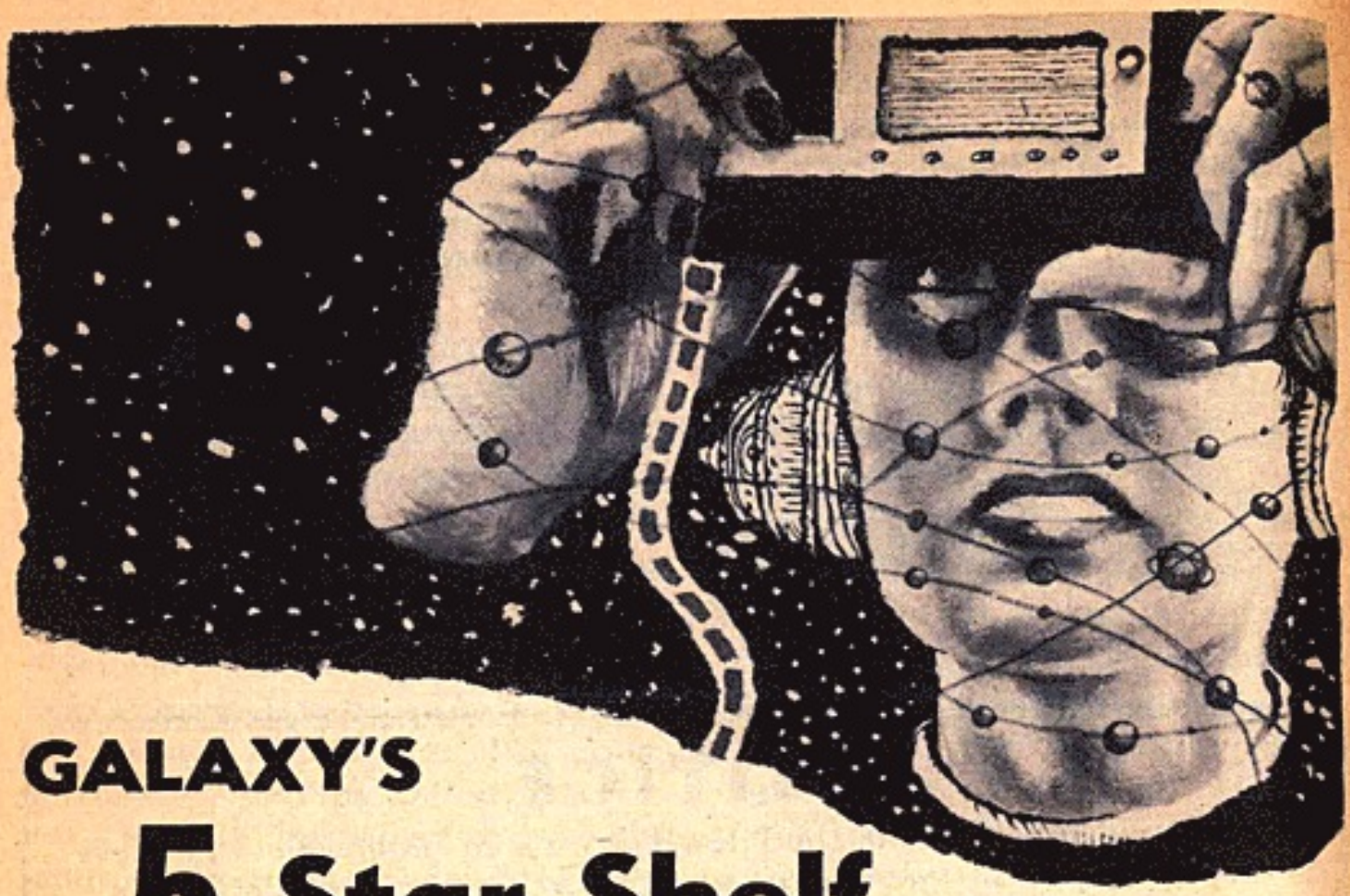
But Fownes had already begun to run on toward the next house, dodging mountainous puffs of glass as he went. "Mrs. Deshazaway!" he shouted. "Yoo-hoo, Mrs. Deshazaway!"

The dome weevils were going berserk trying to keep up with the precipitation. They whirred back and forth at frightful speed, then, emptied of molten glass, rushed to the Trough which they quickly emptied and then rushed about empty-handed. "Yoo-hoo!" he yelled, running. The artificial sun vanished behind the mushrooming twister. Optimum temperature collapsed. "Mrs. Deshazaway! *Agnes,* will you marry me? Yoo-hoo!"

Lanfierre and Lieutenant MacBride leaned against their car and waited, dazed.

There was quite a large fall of glass.

— STANLEY R. LEE



GALAXY'S 5 Star Shelf

RUSSIA is graduating scientists and engineers by the hundreds of thousands yearly — and the production of science fiction has class-A priority with her fiction factories. These are two of the reasons for this month's king-size Junior Education Corner.

THE MOON by George Gamow. Abelard-Schuman, N. Y., $2.75

IN THE belief that it is a sure bet that the Moon will be the first extraterrestrial body to be visited by man, Dr. Gamow's book leads off the astronomical section. It is a clear exposition of fact and theory about our satellite: its origin, composition, effects upon the Earth, etc.

This revision of his 1953 book still retains the amusingly archaic excerpts from Verne's classic *From the Earth to the Moon* in a chapter headed "Moon Projectile — a Dream." Not to end on this note, however, it is followed immediately by "Moon Rocket — a Reality" — which it is indeed.

MEN, PLANETS AND STARS by Clyde B. Clason. G. P. Put-

nam's Sons, N. Y., $2.95

ALTHOUGH CLASON'S book is a solid technical work designed for junior and high school level, his style is far from pedantic.

"Planetoid Icarus is named after a legendary Greek boy who flew too close to the sun with his wax wings. 'Look, Pa. No hands!' "

Despite, or perhaps because of, this semi-humorous approach, Clason establishes a rapport with his youthful audience that makes his space medicine easy to take.

ROCKETS INTO SPACE by Alexander L. Crosby and Nancy Larrick. Random House, N. Y., $1.95

THE EASY-to-read series features simple sentences built from easy words. However, though written for the eight-to-ten-year-old, the plentiful and technically excellent illustrations appeal also to a maturer audience. In fact, the information apparent in the illustrations frequently is not treated in the text, so that even adults can look and learn from this rocket primer.

DISCOVERING THE HEAVENS by I. O. Evans. Roy Publishers, N. Y., $3.50

THIS STUDY of astronomical history is written in a facile style that is exceptionally easy to take to mind. Evans skillfully weaves interesting vignettes of the founders of astronomy into his book and chronicles its laborious growth from superstition to its present eminence among the sciences.

THE ROMANCE OF CHEMISTRY by Keith Gordon Irwin. Viking Press, N. Y., $3.75

EARLY MAN rose from savagery by applying basic physical and chemical laws, but his understanding of these sciences differed greatly. Chemistry, the interlocking of particles impossibly small to see, had to wait for theory to catch up with practice, whereas physical phenomena were self-evident.

Irwin's book, entertainingly informative, highlights epochal moments of discovery that helped lift chemistry to today's level of achievement.

DISCOVERING CHEMISTRY by Elizabeth K. Cooper. Harcourt, Brace & Co., N. Y., $3.00

MRS. COOPER'S book is a splendid follow-up, to *Romance,* which whets the intellectual appetite. She provides plenty of experimental material for the neophyte, a concise work program

and a proper respect for a "serious form of fun."

LOUIS PASTEUR by Madeleine P. Grant. Whittlesey, N. Y., $3.25
GREGOR MENDEL by Harry Sootin. Vanguard Press, N. Y., $3.00
ALBERT EINSTEIN by A. Beckhard. G. P. Putnam's Sons, N. Y., $2.50

PASTEUR AND Mendel both came from poor families who sacrificed enormously to give them schooling. Their battle for education was equally against hunger and privation. Moreover, Mendel's only hope for a livelihood lay in joining the priesthood.

His fame rests on the results of an eight-year experiment with garden peas. Mendel, applying numerical method and rigid control, discovered the mathematics of genetics. Unfortunately, he died unrecognized, his work requiring rediscovery.

Pasteur, however, lived to receive the highest honors. His process of sterilization saved breweries as well as creameries from ruin. Possessing enormous powers of concentration, he plunged into work that saved the French silk industry, and he did it despite the deaths of three of his children. His most valuable contribution, though, remains the germ theory of infection.

Both books are inspirational and well integrated.

Not so with *Einstein*. Working in a restrictive 128-page frame, Beckhard has cut and snipped Einstein's life into a silhouette. This is a pity, he was decidedly not only "$E = MC^2$."

SCIENCE AND THE DOCTOR by F. R. Elwell and Dr. J. M. Richardson. Criterion Books, N. Y., $3.50

MEDICINE LEFT the realm of magic when its practitioners began to tie together cause and effect. Unfortunately, medical practice lost two thousand years to mumbo-jumbo, even though Hippocrates, the ancient Greek, set standards for observation and diagnosis.

This book of thrilling discoveries should channelize the social urge of any young do-gooder.

WINDOW IN THE SKY by Homer E. Newell, Jr. McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., N. Y., $2.75

AS NOTED here previously, Dr. Newell equals his books in interest — he is Associate Director in charge of Space Science for NASA, U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration. His book brims equally with authority.

The upper atmosphere is his special province and here he presents knowledge that was completely unsuspected until rocket soundings became feasible these last several years.

THE CLOCK WE LIVE ON by Isaac Asimov. Abelard-Schuman, N. Y., $3.00

DOCTOR ASIMOV again picks a fascinating theme — Time. He travels this dimension from mankind's ancient Moon and Sun timepieces to the present accurate atomic clocks that, by comparison, make the heavens so reliable that the costliest timepieces are as a Mickey Mouse watch.

THE STORY OF EARTH SCIENCE by Horace G. Richards. J. B. Lippincott Co., Phila., $3.75

FOSSILS, ROCKS and minerals, in that order, attract the interest of laymen or prospective students of Earth science, Richards avers, and his book is planned accordingly. It abounds with information for the neophyte archeologist — from tips on sites for excavation and research to specific information on identification of the aforementioned three categories.

MEN AND WOMEN BEHIND THE ATOM by Sarah U. Riedman. Abelard-Schuman, N. Y., $3.00

MANKIND'S ENTRY into the Atomic Age was assisted by numerous midwives. An enormous amount of information has been distilled into laudably compact, digestible form; no small feat when dealing with the contributions of such as the Curies, Einstein, Rutherford and — contemporary giants.

BLASTOFF AT 0300 by Hugh Walters. Criterion Books, N. Y., $3.50

A QUEER alteration in the outline of the Moon mountain, Pico, causes Britain to hurry its space program in the fear that Russia may already have a base there. A young Cambridge student, short enough to fit a hastily redesigned research rocket, is selected for a preliminary hundred-mile photo-survey jump into space.

The book, a vivid fictional account of the training program necessary for such a venture, includes plenty of action and international intrigue. Plausible and detailed, it is a juvenile *Prelude to Space.*

(For Youngsters)

Rating: *****

STARSHIP TROOPERS by

Robert A. Heinlein. G. P. Putnam's Sons, N. Y. $3.95

IN "TROOPERS," Heinlein has penned a juvenile that *really* is not. This is a new and bitter and disillusioned Heinlein.

His story opens with flaming action and then acquaints the reader, via flashbacks, with his hero, set on acquiring a citizen's franchise and voting rights by serving in the armed forces.

From boot camp into combat, from OCS to command, Heinlein's story is well told, crammed with political theory, and of exceptional interest to veterans with battle experience . . . but youngsters will find it melancholy and verbose. Thus my split rating.

Rating for children: **½
Rating for adults ****½
Rating for civilians: ?

STORM OVER WARLOCK by Andre Norton. World Publishing Co., Cleveland, $3.00

YOUNG, UNEDUCATED Shann Lantee, from the slums of planet Tyr, is one of two human survivors of a Terran survey team on Warlock. Insect-derived Throg beetle-men, with whom Earth has fought to stalemate for years, have wiped out the advance outpost on Warlock, preparatory to interdicting the coming colonist transport.

Miss Norton has again written in an endearing animal team, this time Taggi and Togi, Terran wolverines, to assist Lantee in his vendetta against the Throgs. Her skill in making the incredible believable was never better demonstrated than in this imaginative and adventuresome yarn.

Rating: ****

THE SECRET OF THE NINTH PLANET by Donald Wollheim. The John C. Winston Co., Phila., $2.50

A HUGE, uninhabited alien installation, high in the Andes, is robbing Earth of solar energy. When discovered and smashed by an archeological expedition, other solar traps are planted on each planet. To destroy them, America's first anti-gravity ship is pressed into an odyssey through the Solar System.

The story is rich in action and mystery — up to the very moment that Wollheim presents his villains. Then? Not good.

Rating: ***

Also recommended: THE CAVE HUNTERS by W. E. Scheele. World, $2.50 . . . PEOPLE AND PLACES by Margaret Mead. World, $4.95 . . . OFF INTO SPACE by M. O. Hyde. Whittlesey House, $2.50.

—FLOYD C. GALE