

The Aether Chronicle

The Imaginary Alternate History of the Steampunk Empire

From Thursday January 23, 2014 to Thursday February 14, 2014



PICTURE-POSTCARD OF ELIZA BLASINA, BURLESQUE DANCER AND PROPONENT OF "PONY-PLAY".

THESE IMAGES ARE DRAWN FROM THE CHARLES H. McCAGHY COLLECTION OF EXOTIC DANCE FROM BURLESQUE TO CLUBS. THEY COME FROM THE PERSONAL COLLECTION OF DR. CHARLES H. McCAGHY, PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AT BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY. ¹

BURLESQUE!

TEMPERANCE SOCIETIES AND GOVERNANCES OF MORALITY IN ENGLAND WERE GIVEN A SHARP BLOW TO THE CHIN WHEN THE BROADWAY PRODUCTION "THE DEVIL'S AUCTION" ARRIVED IN LONDON, TO BE HOSTED AT THE GAIETY AND ROYAL STRAND THEATRE.¹ THIS PARTICULAR SHOW PROMISES NOT JUST A TITILLATING PERFORMANCE, BUT THE RISQUÉ DERIVATION OF ONE ELIZA BLASINA, WHO IS KNOWN FOR SUBVERTING THE TRADITIONAL FEMALE ROLES IN BURLESQUE BY INCORPORATING "PONY-PLAY" INTO THE SHOW, A SEXUAL FETISH THAT HAS HISTORICAL PRESENCE IN EUROPE BUT HAS NOT HAD MUCH PRESENCE ON THE STAGES OF ENGLAND, UNTIL NOW.

PONY-PLAY IS EASILY IDENTIFIABLE IN MODERN BURLESQUE SHOWS, FIRST BY THE COSTUMES: IN THE PICTURE-POSTCARD ABOVE, NOTE THE EQUINE HEADDRESS, THE BOOTS DESIGNED TO IMITATE HOOVES, AND THE CURLED HORSE'S TAIL. MISS ELIZA BLASINA'S PERFORMANCE FURTHER DIFFERS FROM OTHER BURLESQUE DANCERS IN THAT SHE DOES NOT EFFECT A "STRIP-TEASE", PER SAY. WHILE HER COSTUME IS REVEALING, SHE EXHIBITS ONLY PONY-BEHAVIOURS ON STAGE: PRANCING, GALLOPING, TOSSING HER HEAD, PAWING, KICKING, ETC. NOW, MISS ELIZA BLASINA DOES ACKNOWLEDGE THE BURLESQUE ATMOSPHERE IN THAT HER PONY-BEHAVIOUR

DOES INVOLVE MUCH DISPLAY OF HER RUMP, FLICKING OF HER TAIL, MUCH ENTICING BOUNCING AS SHE TROTS, AND THE OCCASIONAL WINK AS SHE WHINNIES AT THE AUDIENCE. WHILE THIS PERFORMANCE MAY SEEM COUNTER-INTUITIVE IN A BURLESQUE SHOW, THIS REPORTER WAS AMAZED BY THE POSITIVE RESPONSE SHE RECEIVED FROM THE AUDIENCE. IT WOULD SEEM MISS ELIZA BLASINA GAUGED THE LONDON AUDIENCES CORRECTLY: APPARENTLY, THE TIME IS RIPE FOR PONY-PLAY.

RIOTS AT THE GAIETY AND ROYAL STRAND THEATRE

THE FIRST NIGHT MISS ELIZA BLASINA PERFORMED THERE WAS A MOB FOR TICKETS OUTSIDE THE THEATRE. THE SECOND NIGHT, MISS ELIZA BLASINA LEFT THE THEATRE TO BE MET BY A HORDE OF ADMIRERS. THE THIRD NIGHT, AS MISS ELIZA BLASINA WAS ENTERING THE THEATRE TO PREPARE FOR HER SHOW, SHE WAS PELTED WITH OATS AND HAY BY RELIGIOUS ZEALOTS AND MEMBERS OF PREVALENT GOVERNANCES FOR MORALITY IN ENGLAND WHO CHANTED "HAY IS FOR HORSES!" AT MISS ELIZA BLASINA. THESE GROUPS CLAIM THAT PONY FETISHISM, INDEED, ALL FORMS OF FETISHISM, ARE SINFUL, AND DEMEANING TO THE HUMAN FORM. MISS ELIZA BLASINA CLAIMS THAT EVERYTHING SHE DOES IS CONSENSUAL, PROFITABLE, AND, MOREOVER, ENJOYABLE. IN AN INTERVIEW, SHE EXPLAINED THAT THE PONY FETISH DESCRIBES A DOMINANT VERSUS SUBMISSIVE BALANCE OF POWER³ THAT IS OFTEN FREEING IN A WORLD WHERE GENDER ROLES AND SOCIETAL PRESSURES ARE SO RESTRICTIVE AND DEFINING. "HOW ELSE DO YOU EXPLAIN MALE PONIES, WHO WANT NOTHING MORE THAN TO BE RULED BY THEIR FEMALE RIDERS? PONY PLAY SPEAKS TO SOMETHING PRIMAL IN HUMAN NATURE. IT SATISFIES IN A WAY THAT IS OUTSIDE THE CONVENTIONAL DYNAMIC OF "LOVE" AND "MARRIAGE." THIS REPORTER CONSULTED A PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT OXFORD, WHO SPECIALIZES IN DEVIANCY.⁴ HE CLAIMS THAT THE POWER DYNAMIC IN PONY PLAY IS ACTUALLY A VARIATION ON SADA-MASOCHISM. APPARENTLY, IT IS NOT REALLY ABOUT THE HORSES; IT IS ABOUT THE FANTASY AND THE NEED TO BE DOMINATED.³

PONY FETISHISM

WHILE SUCH DISPLAYS MAY SEEM BIZARRE TO CITIZENS OF WHAT IS SUPPOSED TO BE SUCH A

MODERN CIVILIZED AGE, IN TRUTH PONY FETISHISM HAS A LONG-STANDING HISTORY AMONGST SOME OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CIVILIZATIONS IN HISTORY. PONY FETISHISM HAS BEEN TRACED ALL THE WAY BACK TO THE GREEKS³: ARISTOTLE HIMSELF WAS SEDUCED BY PHYLLIS INTO ALLOWING HER TO RIDE HIM LIKE A HORSE, A SEDUCTION THAT HE THOROUGHLY ENJOYED.² IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY THE KING OF TURKEY KEPT STABLES OF PONY-GIRLS AND PONY-BOYS FOR HIS SEXUAL PLEASURE.³ THAT BEING SAID, PONY-PLAY HAS ESCALATED IN EUROPE FROM BURLESQUE SHOWS TO FULL AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION, WHERE EACH "PONY", MALE OR FEMALE, IS PAIRED WITH A "GROOM, HANDLER OR RIDER." THE PONIES ARE THEN LED AROUND BY LEADS CONNECTED TO BITS IN THEIR MOUTHS. THE PONIES' MOVEMENTS ARE GUIDED BY A SNAP OF THE RIDING CROP, AND WHEN THEY BEHAVE, THEY ARE FED CARROTS, APPLES, AND CUBES OF SUGAR. THE RIDERS ARE REQUIRED TO TEND TO THEIR PONIES: THIS INCLUDES EXERCISING THEM, RUBBING THEM DOWN, BRUSHING THEIR MANES AND TAILS, AND, YES, EVEN DISCIPLINE. DURING THESE DISPLAYS, THE PONIES REMAIN IN CHARACTER THE ENTIRE TIME. THE ONLY WAY FOR THE PONIES TO REVERT TO THEIR HUMAN PERSONAS IS BY WAY OF A "TRIGGER", A WORD, GESTURE, OR PHYSICAL ACTION THAT HAS BEEN PREVIOUSLY AGREED UPON THAT SIGNALS THE END OF PONY PLAY.³



A FEMALE "RIDER" IN MISS ELIZA BLASINA'S PONY SHOW.

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¹ Mashable. "c. 1890: Victorian Burlesque Dancers." 01/10/15. <http://mashable.com/2014/11/11/victorian-burlesque-dancers/>.

² "Pony Play History — Truth, Myth, and Anecdote." 01/10/15. <http://www.cpony.com/home/references.html>.

³ Death in the Saddle. "Bones". Prods. Barry Josephson, Stephen Nathan, Ian Toynton, Carla Kettner, Jonathan Collier. Perfs. Emily Deschanel, David Boreanaz. Writer Hart Hanson. Fox. 10/09/07.

⁴ Rae, Nicole. "SWF — Burlesque in the 19th Century." 01/10/15. <http://fadedandblurred.com/articles/sfw-burlesque-in-the-19th-century/>.



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

SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY REFUTES PROFESSOR'S CLAIM OF MARTIAN LIFE, EINHARDT DETERMINED TO CARRY ON

BY KENT WHITTINGTON

THE ROYAL SCIENCE ACADEMY CONVENED A WEEK AGO TODAY IN ORDER TO DISCUSS THE CLAIMS MADE BY PROFESSOR GODRIC EINHARDT, FORMERLY OF THE ACADEMY HIMSELF, OF LIFE ON MARS AND THE POTENTIAL THREAT THEREOF. IN CLOSED SESSION, THE PROFESSOR DESCRIBED TO HIS GATHERED PEERS IN GREAT DETAIL HOW, BY THE USE OF HIS MAGNIFICENT TELESCOPE, HE HAD BEEN ABLE TO OBSERVE THE SURFACE OF THE RED PLANET NOTING ITS NETWORK OF CANALS, SPARKLING CITIES AS WELL AS MARS' MILITARY MIGHT. PROFESSOR EINHARDT FURTHER EXPLAINED TO THE GATHERED NOTABLES HIS FEARS THAT THE MARTIANS HAVE BECOME AWARE OF US AND ARE GROWING FEARFUL OF OUR MILITARY MIGHT, AMASSING THEIR OWN ARMY IN AN EFFORT TO INVADE OUR PLANET.

EINHARDT WENT ON TO STATE THAT THE ONLY SOLUTION TO THE SITUATION WAS FOR PARLIAMENT TO APPROVE HIS PROPOSAL FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF SEVERAL LARGE SCALE MILITARY SPACE VESSELS POWERED BY HIS REMARKABLE LIGHTER-THAN-AIR ALLOY HE DUBBED AETHERIUM AND SEND THEM FROM EARTH TO ATTACK MARS DIRECTLY BEFORE A COUNTERSTRIKE COULD BE FORMED BY THE MARTIANS.

DESPITE EINHARDT'S CLAIMS, CORROBORATED BY SEVERAL REPUTABLE WITNESSES (YOUR FAITHFUL REPORTER INCLUDED), THE GATHERING OR BRITAIN'S SCIENTIFIC ELITE, ALMOST TO A MAN, REFUTED THE PROFESSOR'S CLAIMS, STATING THAT EINHARDT'S CLAIMS ARE UNFOUNDED AND, WITHOUT CONCRETE EVIDENCE TO THE CONTRARY, WOULD NOT GRANT THEIR SUPPORT OR SANCTION. PROFESSOR REGINALD CALDECOTT, HEAD OF THE ROYAL SCIENCE ACADEMY, FURTHER STATED THAT "CRACKPOT NOTIONS OF ATTACKS BY 'LITTLE GREEN MEN FROM OUTER SPACE' WILL

NOT BE TOLERATED."

THIS PROVES TO BE A HORRIBLE SETBACK FOR PROFESSOR EINHARDT AS, WITHOUT THE ROYAL SCIENCE ACADEMY'S APPROVAL, HIS PROPOSAL TO MOBILIZE OUR MILITARY FORCES IN A PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE AGAINST THE MARTIAN INVASION FORCE WOULD NEVER SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY IN PARLIAMENT.

"WITHOUT PARLIAMENTARY SANCTION I CANNOT RAISE THE MIGHT NECESSARY TO DEFLECT THE COMING INVASION," EINHARDT STATED. "IT TAKES QUITE A BIT OF CAPITAL TO RAISE AN ARMY OF THE MAGNITUDE NECESSARY TO DIVERT AN INVASION, AND I AM A POOR MAN FOR THAT JOB. I MUST SOMEHOW GET PROOF OF THE MARTIANS INTENTIONS TO INVADE."

TODAY YOUR REPORTER DECIDED TO TAKE IT UPON MYSELF TO VISIT PROFESSOR EINHARDT'S HOME AND SEE IF PERHAPS I COULD LIFT THE MAN'S SPIRITS AFTER LAST WEEK'S DEVASTATING BLOW. I WAS MET BY THE PROFESSOR'S AUTOMATON MANSERVANT, EDWARD, WHO INFORMED ME THAT HE HAD PLACED ON GUARD IN THE EVENT OF MY ARRIVAL AND THAT I SHOULD, IN ALL HASTE, MAKE MY WAY TO THE PROFESSOR'S HOME. I DID AS INSTRUCTED AND FOLLOWED THE GRAVEL PATH OVER THE HILLOCK LEADING TO EINHARDT'S HOME. IMAGINE MY SHOCK WHEN YOUR REPORTER REACHED THE HILLCREST AND FOUND NOT ONLY THE GOOD PROFESSOR'S STATELY, IF NOT SOMEWHAT RAMSHACKLE HOME, AND WHAT APPEARED TO BE SOME SORT OF INCOMPLETE VESSEL MOORED TO THE GROUND. THE MOORING, I SUPPOSED, WAS TO KEEP THE TINY VESSEL FROM DRIFTING AWAY SINCE THE SHIP WAS ANCHOR SOME TWENTY FEET IN THE AIR AND NOT LIFTED BY ANY DETECTABLE MEANS. EINHARDT GREETED ME AND, WHEN YOURS TRULY ASKED THE GOOD PROFESSOR ABOUT HIS DEVICE WAS INFORMED THAT HE HAD NOT GIVEN UP ON GOING TO THE RED PLANET. "IT IS FAR TOO IMPORTANT THAT WE REACH MARS BEFORE THE MARTIANS REACH US," HE SAID. "TO THAT END I HAVE BEGUN CONSTRUCTION OF MY OWN SPACE VESSEL."

THE VESSEL ITSELF ISN'T MUCH. I AM TOLD BY EINHARDT THAT IT IS COMPRISED MOSTLY OF SMALL PIECES OF LEFTOVER SCRAP METAL DONATED TO HIM BY THE REMAINS OF A NOW DEFUNCT IRONWORKS. FASHIONED INTO A METAL BALL AND MOUNTED WITH WHAT APPEAR AT FIRST GLANCE TO BE OXYGEN TANKS, ITS COCKPIT IS SMALLER STILL, WITH ONLY ENOUGH ROOM FOR THE SHIP'S PILOT AND ONE OTHER, BUT SEATED IN GENERAL COMFORT THANKS TO THE PROFESSOR'S FORETHOUGHT OF INSTALLING TWO OF HIS THICK LEATHER CHAIRS IN FRONT OF THE CONTROL PANEL. EINHARDT FURTHER EXPLAINED THAT THIS VESSEL MIGHT BE JUST SMALL ENOUGH FOR THE AETHERIUM (PROFESSOR EINHARDT'S MIRACULOUS ANTIGRAVITY METAL) TO PROVIDE THE LIFT NEEDED TO FLOAT ABOVE THE AETHER AND BREAK FREE FROM OUR PLANET'S ATMOSPHERE WITHOUT THE NEED OF ADDITIONAL THRUST. WHAT THRUST WAS NEEDED WOULD BE PROVIDED BY THE VESSEL'S STEAM ENGINE. WHEN PRESSED AS TO THE PURPOSE OF THE VESSEL, AS IT WAS NOTHING LIKE THE MILITARY GRADE MACHINES OF HIS VISION, EINHARDT EXPLAINED THAT THE VESSEL WAS NOT MEANT FOR ATTACKING THE MARTIANS, BUT RATHER

FOR RECONNAISSANCE. IT WAS WHAT THE PROFESSOR SAID NEXT THAT THIS REPORTER WOULD NEVER HAVE EXPECTED IN A MILLION YEARS. EINHARDT LOOKED ME STRAIGHT IN THE EYE AND SAID, "IT IS FOR A RECONNAISSANCE MISSION, IF YOU WILL, AND I WANT YOU TO TAKE PART IN THIS WITH ME. WE SHALL BE SPIES FOR THE CROWN, YOU AND I, AND ASCERTAIN THE MARTIAN'S TRUE INTENTIONS.

IT IS THE GOOD PROFESSOR'S INTENTION THAT HE AND I TRAVEL TO MARS, SET DOWN IN A QUIET LOCATION AWAY FROM MARTIAN CIVILIZATION AND INFILTRATE FROM THERE THE BEST THAT WE CAN. I AM TOLD THAT, FROM WHAT THE GOOD PROFESSOR HAS WITNESSED ON HIS MIRACULOUS TELESCOPE, THE MARTIAN PEOPLE ARE NOT DISSIMILAR TO MANKIND IN APPEARANCE SO DISGUIISING OURSELVES AND INFILTRATING MARTIAN LIFE SHOULD NOT BE A DIFFICULTY. WE SHALL SPEND OUR TIME THERE GATHERING AS MUCH INFORMATION ABOUT THE MARTIAN RACE, THEIR CULTURE, AND ESPECIALLY THEIR TRUE INTENTIONS FOR PLANET EARTH.

AS OF THIS WRITING, I AM PREPARING TO ACCOMPANY PROFESSOR EINHARDT IN HIS SPY MISSION. IF ALL GOES AS HOPED, WHEN NEXT YOU, THE READER, READ THESE STRANGE AND MARVELOUS TALES, YOUR INTREPID REPORTER WILL HAVE MUCH TO SAY ABOUT HIS AND PROFESSOR EINHARDT'S EXPLOITS UPON THE RED PLANET, MARS. IT IS MY HOPE THAT THE MARTIANS DO NOT TRULY WISH FOR WAR. INDEED, IT IS MY HOPE THAT THEY ARE TRULY NOT AWARE OF US AT ALL, ALTHOUGH THAT SEEMS HIGHLY UNLIKELY. UNTIL THEN, DEAR READERS, WATCH THE SKIES! YOU JUST MAY CATCH A GLIMPSE OF THE GOOD PROFESSOR AND I ON OUR WAY TO MARS!



The Aether Review Of Books

The Measure of Temperance, Part Six, by Ichabod Temperance

MR. TEMPERANCE, THERE YOU ARE! I HAVE BEEN LOOKING ALL OVER THE HOTEL FOR YOU. I WAS MOST DISMAYED WHEN YOU DID NOT ARRIVE AT MY DOOR TO ESCORT ME TO BREAKFAST. I FOUND MYSELF MOST FAMISHED AFTER OUR EXERTIONS FROM LAST NIGHT. MR. TEMPERANCE? ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME, SIR?"

"UH, YES, MA'AM."

"VERY GOOD. AS YOU WERE NOT AT HAND TO ATTEND MY MORNING MEAL, I PROCEEDED WITHOUT YOUR ACCOMPANIMENT. I THEN WENT TO SEARCH YOU OUT. DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU ARE A DIFFICULT MAN TO LOCATE AT TIMES, MR. TEMPERANCE?"

"UH, YES, MA'AM."

"YES, WELL, I WAS UNABLE TO LOCATE YOU AT THE FIREARMS MERCHANTS, THE STEAM-CARRIAGE DISTRIBUTORS, NOR THE BLACKSMITHS. I KNOW I MUST HAVE VISITED A DOZEN OR MORE HARDWARE STORES INQUIRING ABOUT YOU. DID YOU KNOW THAT I WAS UNABLE TO LOCATE YOU AT ANY OF THESE, YOUR NORMAL PLACES OF HAUNT AND ENTERTAINMENT?"

"UH, YES, MA'AM."

"INDEED, SIR, I SOUGHT YOU OUT AT VARIOUS CHEMISTS, ALCHEMISTS, AND APOTHECISTS. I FINALLY THOUGHT TO CHECK THE HOTEL BASEMENT AND HERE YOU ARE."

"UH, YES, MA'AM."

"I WAS WONDERING, COULD YOU OFFER AN EXPLANATION FOR YOUR, WHAT SOME MAY CONSTRUE AS RUDE, IF THEY DID NOT KNOW THE PERSON INVOLVED, BEHAVIOURS?"

"UH, YES, MA'AM."

...

"MR. TEMPERANCE, I AM AWAITING THAT AFFIRMED EXPLANATION."

"THAT'S NICE, MISS PLUMTARTT."

"I AM SURE THAT THE PILES OF NOTES AROUND YOU ARE VERY ABSORBING AND I DO HATE TO INTERRUPT YOUR THOUGHT PROCESSES, BUT I DO SO WISH THAT YOU COULD TEAR YOURSELF AWAY JUST LONG ENOUGH TO LOOK UP FROM YOUR FRANTIC SCRIBBLING TO GRANT ME A GLANCING MOMENT OF EYE CONTACT?"

"UH, YES, MA'AM."

...

"MR. TEMPERANCE?"

...

"MR. TEMPERANCE?"

...

"THAT'S NICE, MISS PLUMTARTT."

...

"I SEE. PERHAPS I SHALL INHALE, DRAWING IN BREATH UNTIL MY HEAD SWELLS TO THE SIZE OF MONTGOLFIER BALLOON. AT THAT TIME I SHOULD EXPECT IT TO BURST LIKE SOME GROTESQUE PINATA, RELEASING THOUSANDS OF STORKS, TOUCANS AND PARAKEETS WITH A BILLOWING BOUQUET OF COLOUR IN FLIGHT."

WOULD THIS BE A FITTING ENOUGH OF A SPECTACLE TO DRAW YOUR ATTENTION FROM YOUR STUDIES, EH, HEM?"

"UH, YES, MA'AM."

"OH, SPLENDID. NOW I AM NOT IMPELLED TO HOLD MY BREATH UNTIL HORDES OF WINGED APES ARE FORCEFULLY EJECTED FROM MY POSTERIOR, EH, HEM?"

"UH, YES, MA'AM."

"THAT IS JUST DELIGHTFUL. I GO NOW TO SHED ALL MY CLOTHING AND TO RIDE AS LADY GODIVA THROUGH THE STREETS OF LOS ANGELOS. DOESN'T THAT SOUND NICE, MR. TEMPERANCE?"

"THAT'S NICE MISS PLUMTARTT."

-SLAM!-

{EDITOR'S NOTE: PERSEPHONE HAS A LONG AND EVENTFUL DAY THAT IS OMITTED FROM THIS AETHER CHRONICLE EXCLUSIVE EXCERPT. WE RESUME OUR TALE SOME SEVERAL HOURS AND MANY PAGES LATER...}

I ENTER THE DUSTY LOW-CEILINGED ROOM TO FIND THE CHAP EXACTLY AS I LEFT HIM SOME EIGHT HOURS EARLIER. THE DIFFERENCE IS, HE ACTUALLY NOTICES WHEN I COME IN.

"HOWDY THERE, MISS PLUMTARTT. ARE YOU READY FOR BREAKFAST? I GOTTA ADMIT, I'M STARTIN' TO GET MIGHTY HUNGRY."

"BREAKFAST, MR. TEMPERANCE? AT THIS HOUR?"

"WHY, AS I CHECK MY POCKET WATCH, I SEE THAT IT IS STILL ONLY EIGHT O'CLOCK. I KNOW IT'S A LITTLE LATE FOR BREAKFAST, BUT I'M SURE THE HOTEL WILL STILL ACCOMMODATE US."

"YES, MR. TEMPERANCE, TRUE, IT IS EIGHT O'CLOCK HOWEVER, IT IS EIGHT O'CLOCK P.M., NOT A.M."

"EIGHT O'CLOCK AT NIGHT!? GEE WHIZ, DOES THAT MEAN YOU ATE BREAKFAST WITHOUT ME?"

"INDEED, MR. TEMPERANCE. BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER."

"BUT WHAT ABOUT ME? I'M HUNGRY!"

"MY WORD, I SHOULD THINK YOU WOULD BE, SIR. I TRIED TO GET YOU TO ACCOMPANY ME EARLIER BUT YOU REFUSED TO PAY ME THE SLIGHTEST AMOUNT OF COGNIZANT REGISTRATION. I MUST SAY, I DID NOT CARE FOR THIS INATTENTION. TELL ME, JUST WHAT IS IT THAT HAS FOCUSED YOUR THOUGHTS AND DESIRES TO SUCH A DEGREE, SIR, THAT YOU DO NOT NOTICE THE PASSING OF AN ENTIRE DAY AND ITS COMPLEMENT OF MEALS?"

"OH! YES, MA'AM! I HAVE BEEN WORKING ON A VERY EXCITING SCIENTIFIC PROCESS. MISS PLUMTARTT!"

"INDEED. A STUPENDOUS NEW INVENTION THAT WILL CHANGE MANKIND FOREVER, YOU SAY, EH, HEM? AND WHAT IS THIS GRAIL YOU SEEK?"

"PAINT, MA'AM!"

...

"PAINT, MR. TEMPERANCE?"

"YES, MA'AM, MISS PLUMTARTT! I GOT AN IDEER FOR A NEW KINDA PAINT!"

...

-SIGH- "TELL ME ABOUT YOUR PAINT, MR. TEMPERANCE."

"WELL, I AIN'T GOT NONE YET, MISS PLUMTARTT. IT'S JUST A LITTLE THEORY I'VE BEEN KICKIN' AROUND. YA SEE, IT'S ALL ONNA 'COUNT A ME BEIN' SO FOND OF CHEESE, YA SEE."

"CHEESE, MR. TEMPERANCE?"

"YES, MA'AM. I GOTTA POWERFUL CRAVING FOR CHEESE, MA'AM. I AIN'T NEVER MET A CHEESE I DIDN'T LIKE. WELL, LAST NIGHT, AFTER WE GOT THAT OL' SKU LE'BIZZARRE FELLER SQUARED AWAY, I WAS LOOKIN' UP AT THAT BIG BEAUTIFUL MOON HANGIN' OVER THE CITY. I WAS WISHIN' I COULD JUST REACH UP AND GRAB ME A HUNK O' THAT MOON CHEESE."

"MOON CHEESE, MR. TEMPERANCE?"

"YES, MA'AM, MOON CHEESE. DON'T TELL ME YOU DIDN'T KNOW THE MOON WAS MADE OF CHEESE? I THOUGHT EVERYBODY KNEW THAT! ANYWAYS, I WAS WANTIN' ME SOME O' THAT THERE MOON CHEESE SOMETHIN' AWFUL. WELL ICHABOD, I SAID TO MYSELF, IF YOU WANT IT SO BAD, WHY DON'T YOU JUST GO UP THERE AND GET SOME? WELL, ICHABOD, I ANSWERED MYSELF, I JUST MAY DO THAT."

"MOON CHEESE, MR. TEMPERANCE?"

"YES, MA'AM, MISS PLUMTARTT. BUT THERE IS JUST ONE THING HOLDING ME BACK."

"AND WHAT IS THAT, MR. TEMPERANCE?"

"GRAVITY."

"I SEE."

"YES, MA'AM! THAT'S WHERE THE G.N.P. COMES IN!"

"G.N.P., MR. TEMPERANCE?"

"GRAVITY NULLIFICATION PAINT."

"YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS."

"WELL, IT'S JUST AN IDEER, BUT I'M A THINKIN' THAT IF I COULD MAKE A PAINT THAT RENDERS THE OBJECT PAINTED, IN EFFECT, INVISIBLE TO GRAVITY'S CLINGINESS, I COULD PAINT UP A CARRIAGE AND WHY I'D COULD JUST FLOAT ON UP THERE AND EAT ALL THE MOON CHEESE I WANTED... HEY, WHERE YOU GOIN' MISS PLUM..."

-SLAM!-

The Aether Review Of Books

The Measure of Temperance, Part Six, by Ichabod Temperance

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HE HIGHLY ANTICIPATED BOOK THE MEASURE OF TEMPERANCE IS THE NEXT INSTALLMENT OF THE WIDELY ACCLAIMED TEMPERANCE SERIES BY ICHABOD TEMPERANCE.

PART SIX OF THE MEASURE OF TEMPERANCE BY ICHABOD TEMPERANCE FEATURES A DELIGHTFUL BIT OF THEATRE BETWEEN THE TWO MAIN CHARACTERS: ICHABOD TEMPERANCE AND PERSEPHONE PLUMTARTT. THIS SECTION IS PURE DIALOGUE, WHICH ALLOWS THE TRUE NATURE OF THESE TWO CHARACTERS' RELATIONSHIP TO COME TO THE FORE. AS I READ THIS EXCERPT, I AM CONSTANTLY ASKING MYSELF: "ARE THESE TWO A COUPLE? IS THERE POTENTIAL HERE FOR A ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP? ARE THEY REALLY IN A FIGHT, OR IS THIS JUST PLAYFUL BANTER? WHAT IS THE DEEPER MEANING TO WHAT'S ACTUALLY BEING SAID HERE?"

THE PART WHERE ICHABOD TEMPERANCE PROCLAIMS HIS DESIRE FOR A SLICE OF MOON CHEESE ADDS A LEVEL OF HUMOUR TO THE DIALOGUE THAT READERS HAVE COME TO ANTICIPATE IN THE TEMPERANCE SERIES. HIS PLAN TO "HARVEST" THE MOON CHEESE BY TRAVELLING TO THE MOON BY WAY OF "G.N.P."—GRAVITY NULLIFYING PAINT—IS A PART OF WHAT MAKES THIS SERIES FUNNY AND ENGAGING STEAMPUNK ADVENTURE!

FOR ALL THOSE READERS WHO ARE NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE TEMPERANCE SERIES, READ BELOW FOR A SYNOPSIS OF THE AUTHOR'S INSPIRING WORK.

THE TEMPERANCE SERIES CHRONICLES THE JOURNEY OF THE MAIN CHARACTER ICHABOD TEMPERANCE. THE FIRST BOOK, "A MATTER OF TEMPERANCE", DETAILS THE CATALYST THAT BEGAN ICHABOD'S GRAND ADVENTURES: THE PASSING OF THE 'REVELATORY COMET' IN THE SUMMER OF 1869. ICHABOD WAS ONE OF THE MANY FOLKS FROM AROUND THE WORLD THAT FOUND THEMSELVES STRANGELY AFFECTED BY THE COMET'S PASS. HE WAS STRUCK WITH THE SAME KNACK FOR INVENTION AS THOUSANDS OF OTHERS WERE. THIS LED TO HIS CONSTRUCTION OF SOME WONDROUS GOGGLES THAT THEN LED TO HIS SERENDIPITOUS MEETING OF MISS PERSEPHONE PLUMTARTT. IN THE FIRST NOVEL, 'A MATTER OF TEMPERANCE', ICHABOD TEMPERANCE AND PERSEPHONE PLUMTARTT BATTLE MONSTERS FROM ANOTHER DIMENSION THAT ARE INTENT UPON THE ENSLAVEMENT OF OUR UNIVERSE.

IN THE SECOND NOVEL, "A WORLD OF TEMPERANCE" MANY OF EARTH'S LEADERS ARE BENT ON WORLD DOMINATION. THEIR LUST FOR POWER OPENS THE WAY FOR AN EVIL CONSPIRACY READY TO MOP UP THE REMAINS OF HUMANITY. ICHABOD AND PERSEPHONE SHARE THEIR ODYSSEY WITH MANY COLOURFUL CHARACTERS.

THE THIRD NOVEL, "FOR THE LOVE OF TEMPERANCE" PROMISES NEW BATTLES AND NEW VILLIANS TO FIGHT ON A PLANETARY LEVEL. IT HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS IS THE SCARIEST NOVEL OF THE THREE.

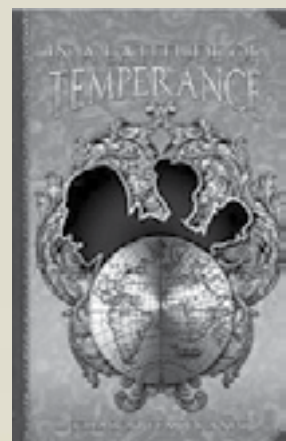
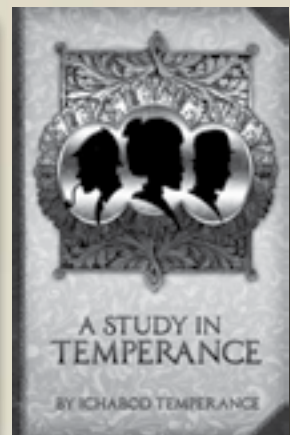
IN THE FOURTH INSTALLMENT OF THE TEMPERANCE SERIES, ICHABOD TEMPERANCE TEAMS UP WITH A FAMOUS VICTORIAN LONDON DETECTIVE FOR A NEW OUTRAGEOUS ADVENTURE!

THE FIFTH NOVEL, "IN LATITUDE OF TEMPERANCE", THE AUTHOR INTRODUCES A NUMBER OF NEW AND VIBRANT CHARACTERS. THE PROSPECT OF VAMPIRE HUNTERS IS VERY PROMISING...AS IS THE UNIQUE AND ODD GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS, WHOM I EXPECT WOULD KEEP READERS ENTERTAINED AND INTRIGUED.

WHATEVER THE ADVENTURE, WHATEVER THE INTRIGUE, THE TEMPERANCE SERIES HAS ALWAYS BEEN WONDERFULLY, HOPELESSLY 'STEAMPUNK.' THE AUTHOR HIMSELF DESCRIBES 'STEAMPUNK' AS "HAPPILY-EVER-AFTER ACTION ROMANCES TOLD IN A HUMOROUS FASHION."

AUTHOR ICHABOD TEMPERANCE HAS ALWAYS PRIDED HIMSELF ON MAINTAINING A CERTAIN STANDARD WHEN IT COMES TO HIS STEAMPUNK NOVELS: HE DOES NOT APPROVE OF GRAPHIC SEX OR VIOLENCE IN HIS TALES, AND HE IS CATEGORICALLY OPPOSED TO STRONG LANGUAGE FINDING ITS WAY INTO HIS BOOKS. HOWEVER, AS THE ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ICHABOD TEMPERANCE AND PERSEPHONE PLUMTARTT IS ALWAYS PRESENT AS A SECONDARY STORY LINE, READERS CAN EXPECT A FEW LIGHT-HEARTED INNUENDOS!

READERS WHO ARE NEW TO THE TEMPERANCE BOOKS CAN DIVE RIGHT INTO THIS SIXTH NOVEL, WITHOUT FEELING THE NEED TO START WITH NOVEL ONE. THE TALES ARE "STAND-ALONE ADVENTURES", AND WHILE IT MIGHT BE ADVISABLE TO BEGIN AT THE START OF THE SERIES, IT IS CERTAINLY NOT REQUIRED IN ORDER TO ENJOY THESE RIPPING-GOOD YARNS!



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

AN UNFORTUNATE INVENTION

THE MATTERSON STEAM TABLE INVENTED BY RENOWNED ENGINEER MR MATTHEW

MATTERSON WHO ALSO INVENTED THE MATTERSON STEAM CRADLE THAT PROVIDES RHYTHMIC ROCKING WITH NO TEDIOUS EFFORT REQUIRED FROM THE PARENT, WAS DEMONSTRATED TO A CROWD OF INVITED GUESTS AT MR MATTERSON'S PUTNEY WORKSHOP. WHILE YOUR CORRESPONDENT DIDN'T ACTUALLY COUNT ALL WHO WERE THERE, A GUESS MIGHT BE OVER ONE HUNDRED WHO WERE MOSTLY GENTLE FOLK AND BENEFACTORS OF MR MATTERSON. THE STEAM TABLE, WITH A HEAVY TOP OF SOLID ENGLISH OAK SUPPORTED BY CAST IRON FRAMES LOOKED MOST IMPRESSIVE, BUT IT WAS THE GEARING UNDER THE TABLE, ACTUATED BY STEAM THAT GOT THE MOST ATTENTION. MR MATTERSON EXPLAINED THAT THE STEAM ENTERING A CYLINDER FORCED AN ARM TO MOVE IN AND OUT MUCH LIKE ON A STEAM LOCOMOTIVE AND THIS TURNED A GEAR THAT THEN MOVED A GEAR TOOTHED RACK UPWARDS THEREBY ADJUSTING THE HEIGHT OF THE TABLE. HE SAID THE APPLICATIONS WERE LIMITLESS AND SUGGESTED THAT IT WAS USEFUL TO ADJUST THE HEIGHT OF WORK TABLES TO SUIT MEN OF DIFFERENT HEIGHTS OR EVEN WOMEN. TO DEMONSTRATE HE SELECTED TWO MEMBERS OF HIS AUDIENCE, A MAN OF CONSIDERABLE HEIGHT AND OF NO SOCIAL CONSEQUENCE, AND MISS ELIZABETH SKIRLING, DAUGHTER OF HIS MAIN BENEFACTOR, LORD SKIRLING OF OUST. FIRST MR MATTERSON HAD THE MAN STAND BY THE TABLE WHICH HE RAISED TO ABOVE THE HEIGHT OF HIS WAIST ELICITING A CHEER FROM THE CROWD. HE THEN ASKED MISS SKIRLING TO STEP FORWARD TO REPLACE THE MAN, WHICH SHE DID, THOUGH SHE LOOKED A LITTLE UNCERTAIN TO YOUR CORRESPONDENT'S EYE. WITH A FLAMBOYANT WAVE OF HIS HAND MR MATTERSON SET THE GEAR IN MOTION TO LOWER THE TABLE. PERHAPS IF HE HAD BEEN WATCHING THE GEARS INSTEAD OF THE CROWD HE WOULD BE IN BETTER FORTUNE TODAY, FOR THE GEARS UNDER THE TABLE CAUGHT THE HEM OF THE DRESS OF MISS SKIRLING AND BUT FOR THE SWIFT ACTION OF THE TALL MAN WHO CAUGHT HOLD OF HER ARMS AS SHE WAS BEING DRAGGED UNDER THE TABLE SHE MAY WELL HAVE LOST HER LIFE. AS IT WAS, HER DRESS, PETTICOAT, BODICE AND ALL WAS COMPLETELY TORN FROM HER BODY LEAVING HER IN A STATE OF IMMODEST UNDRESS AND MR MATTERSON WITH A LOOK OF EXTREME SURPRISE ON HIS FACE. WHILE GENTLEMEN AVERTED

THEIR EYES, THE TALL MAN HEROICALLY TRIED TO SHIELD HER NAKEDNESS AND RED FACE WITH HIS BODY. LORD SKIRLING, REMOVING A SHAWL FROM LADY SKIRLING'S SHOULDERS CAME TO HIS DAUGHTER'S RESCUE AND QUICKLY BUNDLED HER OUT OF THE ROOM; A LOOK OF RAGE DIRECTED AT MR MATTERSON TOLD US THAT HE WOULD NEED TO FIND ANOTHER BENEFACTOR AND THERE WAS UNLIKELY TO BE ANY INTERESTED IN HIS UNFORTUNATE INVENTION FROM ANYONE PRESENT. THE CLEAR MESSAGE HERE IS, 'DON'T TRY TO IMPRESS YOUR BENEFACTOR BY USING HIS DAUGHTER TO DEMONSTRATE AN UNTRIED INVENTION.' I AM INFORMED THAT MR MATTERSON HAS BOOKED PASSAGE FOR THE ANTIPODES, NO DOUBT A WISE CHOICE IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

YOUR HUMBLE CORRESPONDENT,

TROPPL E ARMITAGE

A REMARKABLE CAPTURE

AS TECHNOLOGY IS DRIVEN BY THE ALMOST LIMITLESS POTENTIAL OF STEAM IT IS SOMETIMES TRULY AMAZING WHAT INVENTIONS TRANSPIRE TO PRESENT THEMSELVES. PROFESSOR BYRON BLIXBY, OF CAMBRIDGE, WHO HAS RECENTLY RETURNED FROM HIS JOURNEYS TO THE LEVANT HAS BOUGHT US EVIDENCE OF TRULY EXOTIC CREATURES WHICH I CAN ATTEST TO HAVING SEEN WITH MY OWN EYES! WHEREAS OTHERS HAVE BOUGHT EXOTIC BEASTS FROM AFRICA USUALLY IN IRON BOUND CAGES AND NEEDING MORE THAN AN AIRSHIP TO CARRY THEM, NOT SO PROFESSOR BLIXBY, FOR HE HAS INVENTED THE BLIX CAPTURE MACHINE. THIS REMARKABLE DEVICE LOOKING MORE LIKE A PEDESTAL MOUNTED WEAPON THAN AN ITEM OF SCIENTIFIC PARAPHERNALIA IS A SIGHT TO BEHOLD AND AMAZE. THE CAPTURE OPERATOR, A HIGHLY TRAINED ASSISTANT TO PROFESSOR BLIXBY, SITS ON A SEAT ATTACHED TO THE DEVICE AND PLACES THEIR EYE TO AN OCULAR WHILE TURNING HANDLES THAT RAISE AND LOWER THE 'BARREL' OF THE MACHINE AND POINT IT AT THE ANIMAL OF INTEREST. THEN, WITH THE PULL OF A LEVER THERE IS A FLASH AND BANG AND THE CREATURE IS CAPTURED FOREVER, OR RATHER THEIR ESSENCE IS, WITHIN THE MACHINE, OR SO I AM INFORMED. PEERING INTO THE OCULAR, YOUR CORRESPONDENT WAS ABLE TO SEE A

CREATURE THE LIKES OF WHICH ARE USUALLY RELEGATED TO THE TALES OF MARINERS. IT WAS FEARSOME, HAVING TWO MIGHTY CLAWS AND A TAIL TIPPED WITH A BARB SHARPER THAN ANY SPEAR. WHILE ITS DISTILLED ESSENCE WAS BUT SMALL I CAN ONLY IMAGINE WHAT THE FULL SIZE CREATURE WAS LIKE. THE BRAVERY OF PROFESSOR BLIXBY AND HIS ASSISTANTS IS WITHOUT DOUBT AND SHOULD BE RECOGNISED BY HER MAJESTY WHO MIGHT FIND THE DEVICE USEFUL FOR DISTILLING THE ESSENCE OF SOME OF HER MORE TROUBLESOME PEERS.

YOUR HUMBLE CORRESPONDENT,

TROPPL E ARMITAGE



TROPPL E. ARMITAGE,
FEATURE COLUMNIST