

MNEMO, SON OF LITTLE NEMO, *IN* NOSTALGI

by JOHN ADKINS RICHARDSON

NIGHT CRAWLS INTO THE CENTER OF THE CITY, EMPTYING THE STREETS OF PASSERSBY. LATE WINTER'S MIST BRUSHES BY DEEP SHADOWS AND NUZZLES WINDOWPANS IN OLD BUILDINGS ON DECLINING STREETS. "NEMO'S SLUMBERLAND BOOKSTORE & NOVELTY SHOP" IS CLOSED, CHAINLOCKED, AND GATED. FROM ITS LOFT, TWO SLIGHT VOICES EMANATE....

AH, SON, HOW I WISH THAT THERE WERE SOMEWHERE ELSE FOR YOU TO SLEEP. THAN HERE, AMONG THESE ANCIENT COMIC BOOKS AND DUSTY OLD NEWSPAPERS!

IT'S ALL RIGHT, DAD! I DON'T MIND IN THE LEAST!

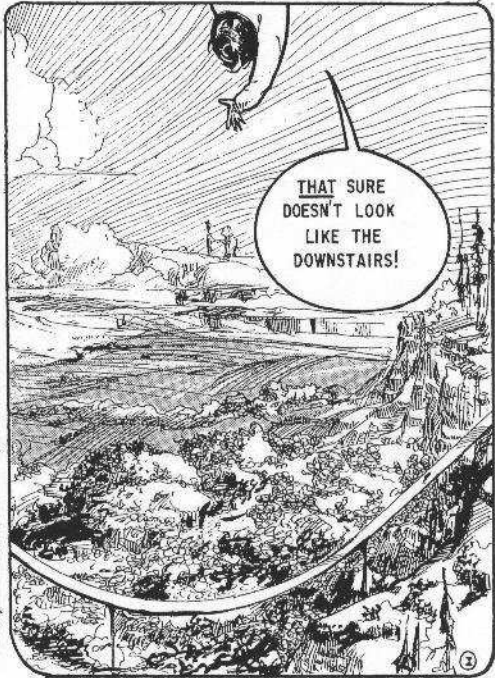
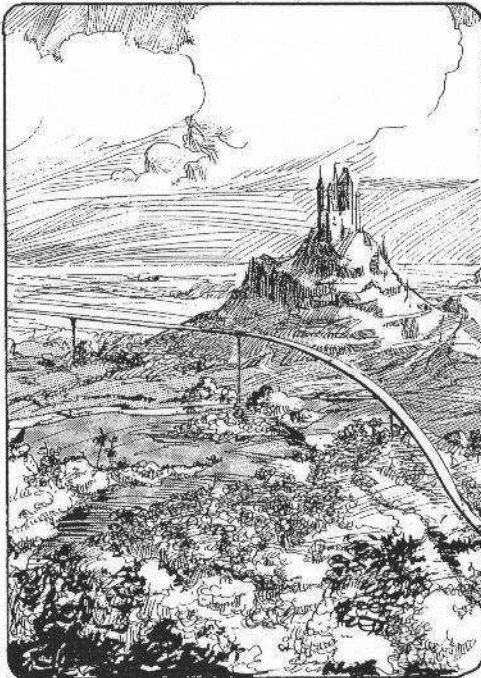
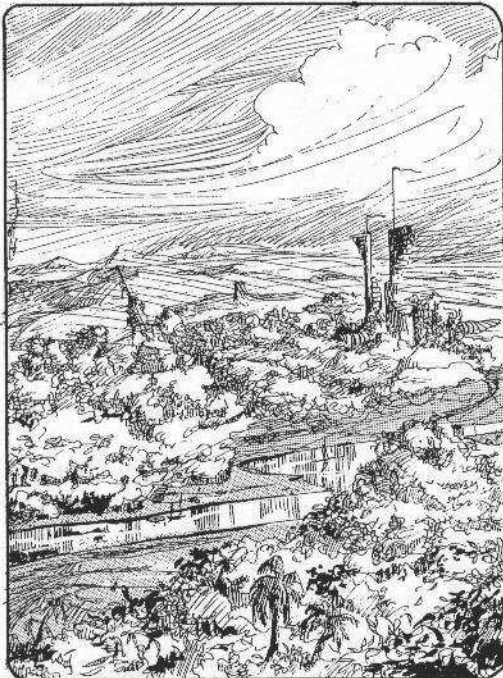
THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING TO READ, 'SPECIALLY SINCE MISTER McFAD GAVE YOU HIS BIG BUNCH OF "GOLDEN AGERS!"

GAVE ONLY TO SELL, LAD! BUT MY COMMISSION COULD GET US AWAY FROM THIS HIPPIES' HAVEN AND INTO A NEIGHBORHOOD WHERE PEOPLE BUY SOMETHING BESIDES PORNOGRAPHY AND POT! WE COU-- OH, WELL, IT'S TIME FOR BED!

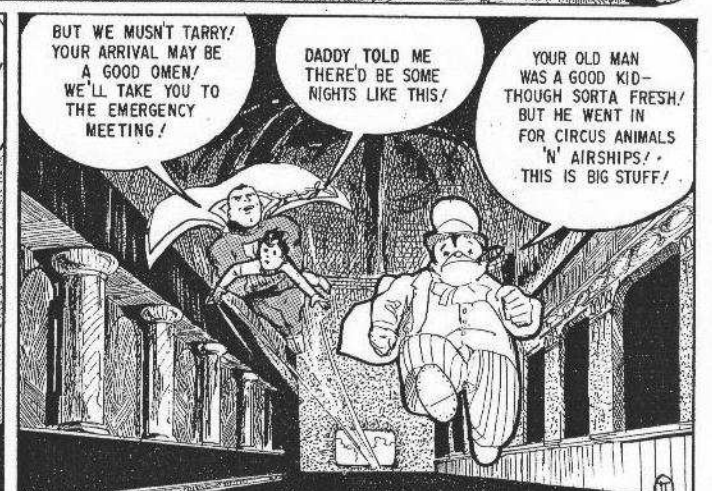
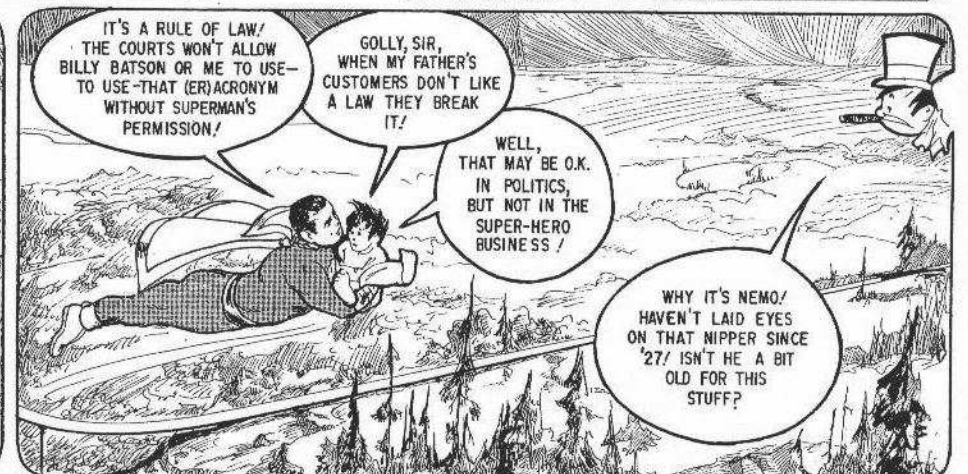
POOR DADDY... NOW HE'LL GO TAKE OFF HIS LOVE BEADS 'N' WIG, AND WATCH TV. HE'LL "RESUME HIS TRUE IDENTITY" JUST LIKE AN OLD TIME SUPER-HERO...

HEY! THE BED IS SINKING!!!

WHAT IN...?!!



THAT SURE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THE DOWNSTAIRS!





HERE WE ARE!

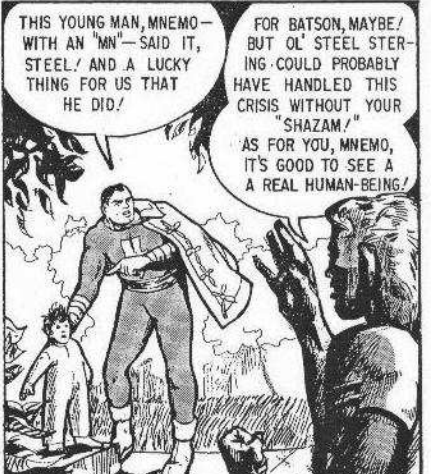
WELL, WELL, LOOK WHO'S HERE!

AND ABOUT TIME TOO!

WHAT A CUTE -- LITTLE BOY!

HEY, MARVEL! WHO SAID "SHAZAM?"

WOW!



THIS YOUNG MAN, MNEMO-- WITH AN "MN"-- SAID IT, STEEL! AND A LUCKY THING FOR US THAT HE DID!

FOR BATSON, MAYBE! BUT OL' STEEL STERLING COULD PROBABLY HAVE HANDLED THIS CRISIS WITHOUT YOUR "SHAZAM!" AS FOR YOU, MNEMO, IT'S GOOD TO SEE A REAL HUMAN-BEING!



S-SIR? I DON'T UNDERSTAND... WHEN I SAID THE MAGIC WORD, YOU CHANGED! BUT WHEN MR. STERLING SAYS IT NOTHING HAPPENS! WHY IS THAT?

BECAUSE WE-- NONE OF US-- CAN BE SUMMONED INTO EXISTENCE EXCEPT THROUGH HUMAN RECOLLECTION!

À LA RECHERCHE DU TEMPS PERDU, LITTLE BOY! "REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST!"

*COLLECTIVE TITLE OF A SERIES OF NOVELS BY M. PROUST.



AND, SINCE THAT IS THE CASE, IT MUST ALSO BE TRUE THAT YOU KNOW THE OTHER MEMBERS OF OUR AD HOC SECURITY COMMITTEE!*

YOU'RE A GOOD SCOUT, LAD!

YEAH! NOW TURN MARVEL BACK TO BILLY SO WE CAN HAVE ANOTHER YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE BESIDES ME!

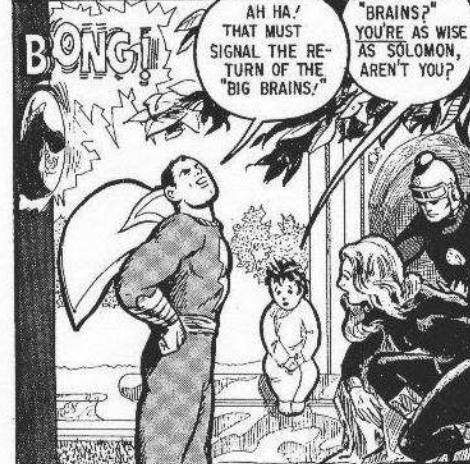
HE'S ONLY TEASING, MNEMO! WE MAY NEED CAPTAIN MARVEL!

HI!

WELL, I AM AT YOUR SERVICE, WIDDER LADY, NO MATTER WHAT GETS SAID!

NICE OF YOU TO THINK OF US CHUM!

*FLASH GORDON(King Syn.)
BUCK ROGERS(Mat. Newsp. Syn.)
AIRBOY (Hillman)
THE TARGET (Novelty)
BLACK WIDOW (Timely)
STEEL STERLING (ML.)
Anyone can see that this is an educational strip; it even has footnotes...



BONG!

AH HA! THAT MUST SIGNAL THE RETURN OF THE "BIG BRAINS!"

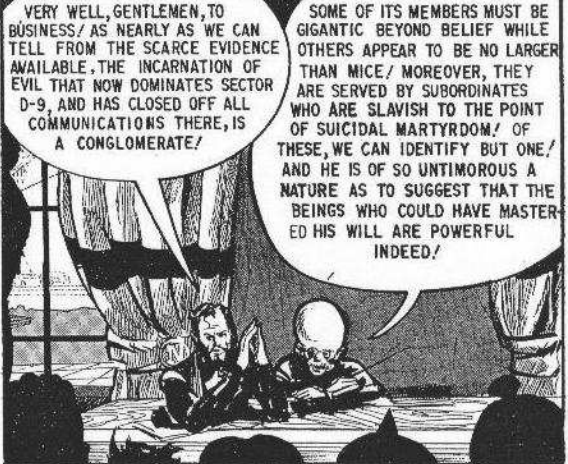
"BRAINS?" YOU'RE AS WISE AS SOLOMON, AREN'T YOU?



THAT WISDOM IS TOO ARCHAIC FOR WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST NOW! TODAY THE SUZERINITY OF SUPERSCIENCE IS COMPLETE!

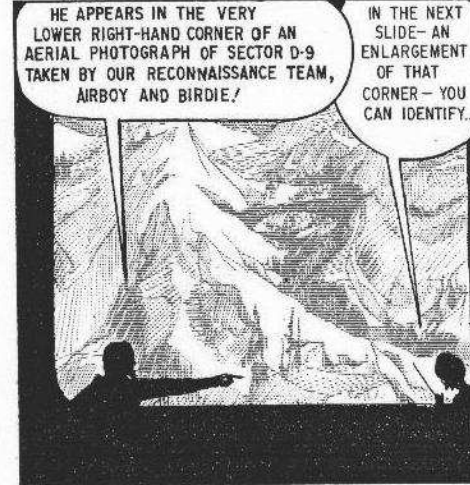
THE DOCTORS HUER AND ZARKOV!

HUH?



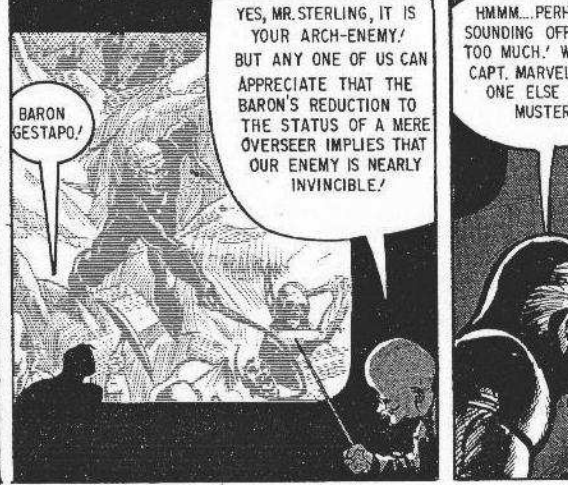
VERY WELL, GENTLEMEN, TO BUSINESS! AS NEARLY AS WE CAN TELL FROM THE SCARCE EVIDENCE AVAILABLE, THE INCARNATION OF EVIL THAT NOW DOMINATES SECTOR D-9, AND HAS CLOSED OFF ALL COMMUNICATIONS THERE, IS A CONGLOMERATE!

SOME OF ITS MEMBERS MUST BE GIGANTIC BEYOND BELIEF WHILE OTHERS APPEAR TO BE NO LARGER THAN MICE! MOREOVER, THEY ARE SERVED BY SUBORDINATES WHO ARE SLAVISH TO THE POINT OF SUICIDAL MARTYRDOM! OF THESE, WE CAN IDENTIFY BUT ONE! AND HE IS OF SO UNTIMOROUS A NATURE AS TO SUGGEST THAT THE BEINGS WHO COULD HAVE MASTERED HIS WILL ARE POWERFUL INDEED!



HE APPEARS IN THE VERY LOWER RIGHT-HAND CORNER OF AN AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF SECTOR D-9 TAKEN BY OUR RECONNAISSANCE TEAM, AIRBOY AND BIRDIE!

IN THE NEXT SLIDE-- AN ENLARGEMENT OF THAT CORNER-- YOU CAN IDENTIFY...



BARON GESTAPO!

YES, MR. STERLING, IT IS YOUR ARCH-ENEMY! BUT ANY ONE OF US CAN APPRECIATE THAT THE BARON'S REDUCTION TO THE STATUS OF A MERE OVERSEER IMPLIES THAT OUR ENEMY IS NEARLY INVINCIBLE!



HMMM...PERHAPS I WAS SOUNDING OFF A LITTLE TOO MUCH! WE'LL NEED CAPT. MARVEL AND EVERYONE ELSE WE CAN MUSTER!

THANKS, IRON PANTS! BUT MAYBE THINGS AREN'T SO BAD! MR. MIND ALSO HAD MONSTERS FOR MINIONS!

HEY KID, D'YOU LIKE TO FISH? SECTOR D-9 IS THE PLACE FOR BAIT! LOOK AT THIS!



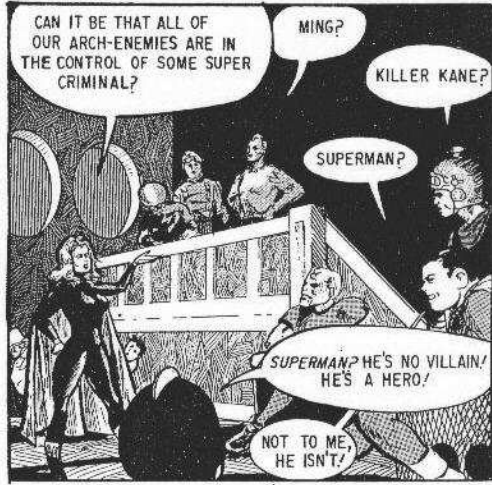
HEY, COOL! EVEN THE LITTLE WORMS ARE WORKING!

WHAT'S THAT? LET ME S-- OH, NOOOO...!



WHAT'S THE MATTER?

THE FAT WORM WITH THE BOX ON HIS (ER)NECK IS MR. MIND, MY MOST FORMIDABLE OPPONENT! EVEN HE IS AN UNDERLING!



CAN IT BE THAT ALL OF OUR ARCH-ENEMIES ARE IN THE CONTROL OF SOME SUPER CRIMINAL?

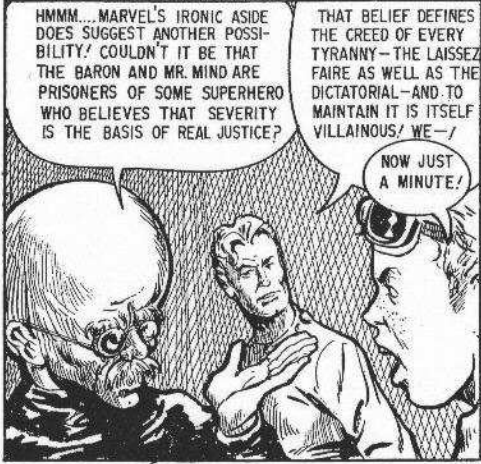
MING?

KILLER KANE?

SUPERMAN?

SUPERMAN? HE'S NO VILLAIN! HE'S A HERO!

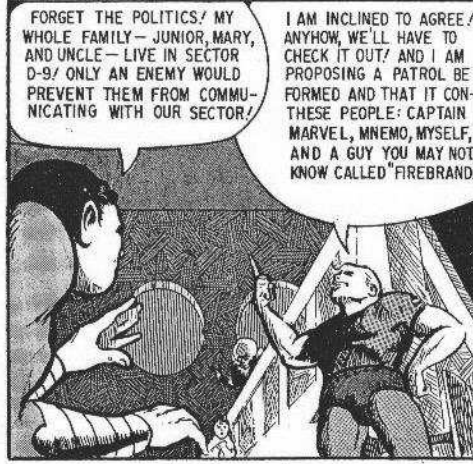
NOT TO ME, HE ISN'T!



HMMM... MARVEL'S IRONIC ASIDE DOES SUGGEST ANOTHER POSSIBILITY! COULDN'T IT BE THAT THE BARON AND MR. MIND ARE PRISONERS OF SOME SUPERHERO WHO BELIEVES THAT SEVERITY IS THE BASIS OF REAL JUSTICE?

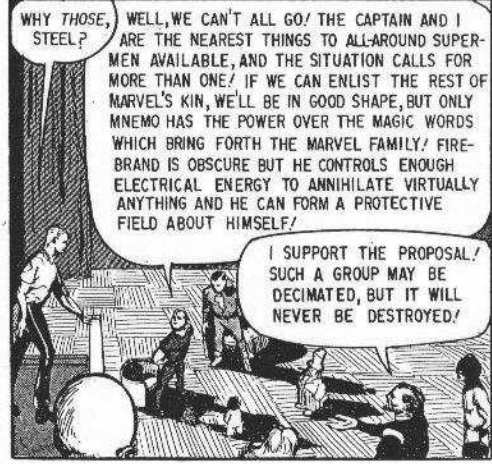
THAT BELIEF DEFINES THE CREED OF EVERY TYRANNY--THE LAISSEZ FAIRE AS WELL AS THE DICTATORIAL--AND TO MAINTAIN IT IS ITSELF VILLAINOUS! WE--

NOW JUST A MINUTE!



FORGET THE POLITICS! MY WHOLE FAMILY-- JUNIOR, MARY, AND UNCLE-- LIVE IN SECTOR D-9! ONLY AN ENEMY WOULD PREVENT THEM FROM COMMUNICATING WITH OUR SECTOR!

I AM INCLINED TO AGREE! ANYHOW, WE'LL HAVE TO CHECK IT OUT! AND I AM PROPOSING A PATROL BE FORMED AND THAT IT CON-- THESE PEOPLE: CAPTAIN MARVEL, MNEMO, MYSELF, AND A GUY YOU MAY NOT KNOW CALLED 'FIREBRAND'!



WHY THOSE, STEEL?

WELL, WE CAN'T ALL GO! THE CAPTAIN AND I ARE THE NEAREST THINGS TO ALL-AROUND SUPERMEN AVAILABLE, AND THE SITUATION CALLS FOR MORE THAN ONE! IF WE CAN ENLIST THE REST OF MARVEL'S KIN, WE'LL BE IN GOOD SHAPE, BUT ONLY MNEMO HAS THE POWER OVER THE MAGIC WORDS WHICH BRING FORTH THE MARVEL FAMILY! FIREBRAND IS OBSCURE BUT HE CONTROLS ENOUGH ELECTRICAL ENERGY TO ANNIHILATE VIRTUALLY ANYTHING AND HE CAN FORM A PROTECTIVE FIELD ABOUT HIMSELF!

I SUPPORT THE PROPOSAL! SUCH A GROUP MAY BE DECIMATED, BUT IT WILL NEVER BE DESTROYED!

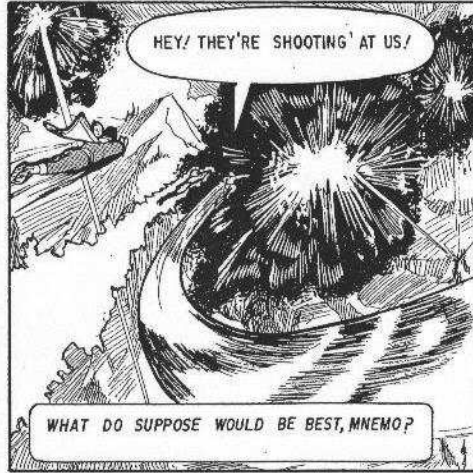


LATER...

GEE, CAPTAIN, THIS IS FUN... BUT Y'KNOW WHAT? I DON'T LIKE THE WAY THIS STRIP IS DRAWN!

WHA-?!! SHHHHHH! NEVER EVER RISK OFFENDING YOUR CREATOR!

AUTHOR'S NOTE: THERE'S DISSENSION EVERYWHERE NOWADAYS! STILL, THERE'S SOMETHING TO THE COMPLAINT; THIS IS A LESS THAN PERFECT BLENDING OF STYLES...



HEY! THEY'RE SHOOTING AT US!

WHAT DO SUPPOSE WOULD BE BEST, MNEMO?



ACHTUNG!

PERHAPS THE OLD SIMON 'N' KIRBY FIRST-YEAR ANATOMY TEXTBOOK SLITHERINESS?



UND ZO VEE MEET AGAIN, HERR SCHTERLINK!

THAT WE DO, BARON!

OR MAYBE THE LATER KIRBY 'CALIF. MARVELIST' IDIOM...?



AH HA!

TO CONTINUE IN THIS VEIN, THERE'S ALWAYS THE POLISHED 'SCUBA-DUBA POLYESTER REALM OF STERANKO OR G. COLAN.



...OR OLD ANNIE-FANNY-FACE HIMSELF, BILL ELDER.

I'LL TELL DR. WERTHAM ON Y-- ARRHARRGG...



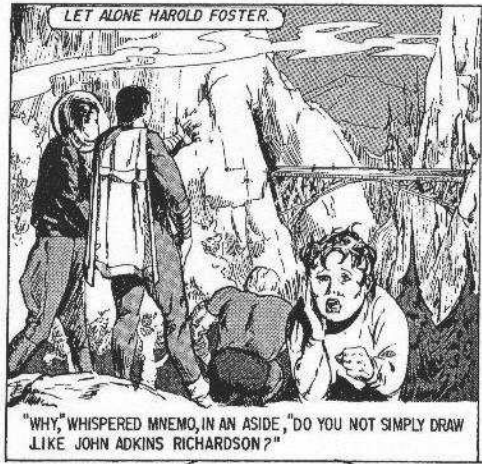
OR WHAT'S-HIS-NAME, WHO DRAWS LIKE A "TURNED-ON" J. ALLEN ST. JOHN.



IF YOU PREFER "STRAIGHTNESS" THERE'S ALWAYS RAYMOND...

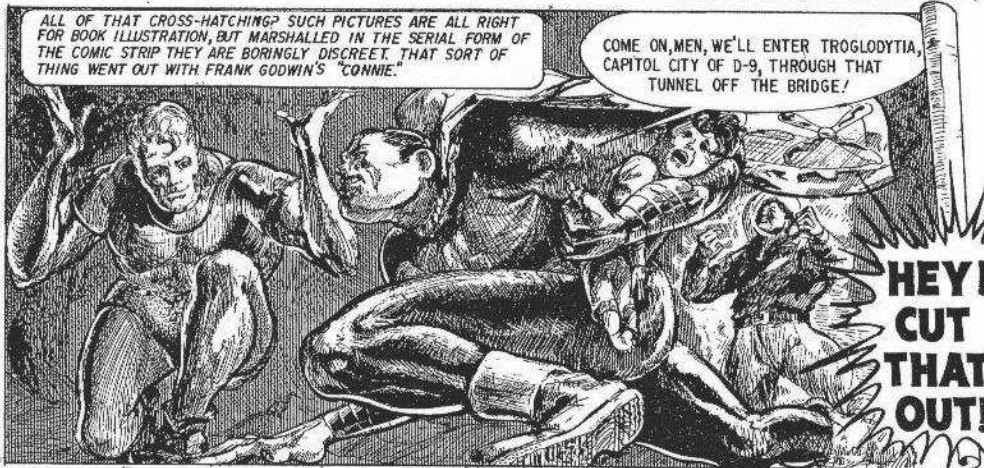


OR BURNE HOGARTH,



LET ALONE HAROLD FOSTER.

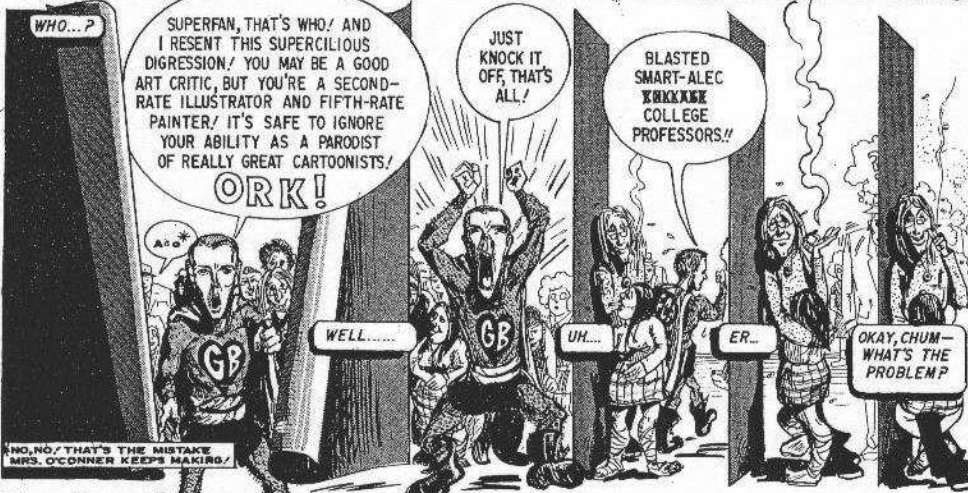
"WHY, WHISPERED MNEMO, IN AN ASIDE, "DO YOU NOT SIMPLY DRAW LIKE JOHN ADKINS RICHARDSON?"



ALL OF THAT CROSS-HATCHING? SUCH PICTURES ARE ALL RIGHT FOR BOOK ILLUSTRATION, BUT MARSHALLED IN THE SERIAL FORM OF THE COMIC STRIP THEY ARE BORINGLY DISCREET. THAT SORT OF THING WENT OUT WITH FRANK GODWIN'S "CONNIE."

COME ON, MEN, WE'LL ENTER TROGLODYTIA, CAPITOL CITY OF D-9, THROUGH THAT TUNNEL OFF THE BRIDGE!

HEY! CUT THAT OUT!



WHO...?

SUPERFAN, THAT'S WHO! AND I RESENT THIS SUPERCILIOUS DIGRESSION! YOU MAY BE A GOOD ART CRITIC, BUT YOU'RE A SECOND-RATE ILLUSTRATOR AND FIFTH-RATE PAINTER! IT'S SAFE TO IGNORE YOUR ABILITY AS A PARODIST OF REALLY GREAT CARTOONISTS! **ORK!**

JUST KNOCK IT OFF, THAT'S ALL!

BLASTED SMART-ALEC ~~KKKKK~~ COLLEGE PROFESSORS!!

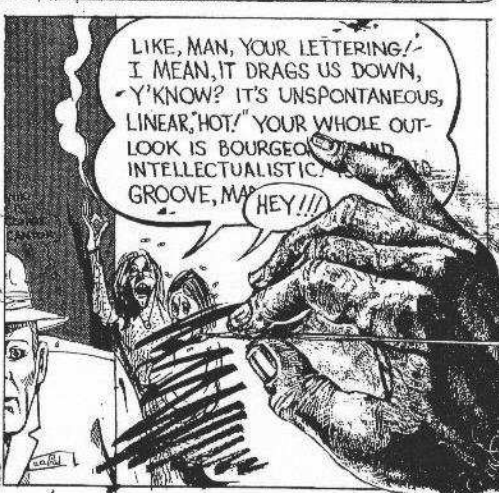
WELL.....

UH...

ER...

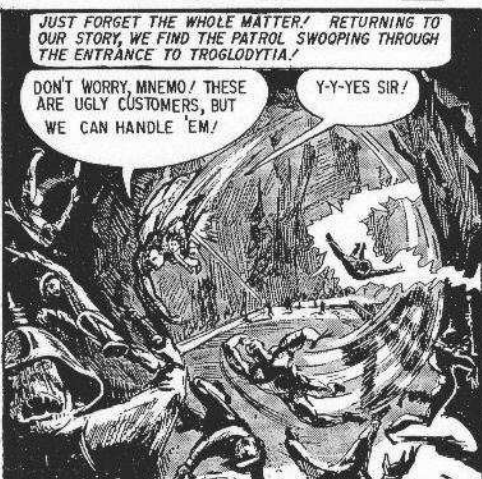
OKAY, CHUM—WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

NO, NO, THAT'S THE MISTAKE MRS. O'CONNOR KEEPS MAKING!



LIKE, MAN, YOUR LETTERING! I MEAN, IT DRAGS US DOWN, -Y-KNOW? IT'S UNSPONTANEOUS, LINEAR, "HOT!" YOUR WHOLE OUTLOOK IS BOURGEOIS AND INTELLECTUALISTIC. GROOVE, MAN!

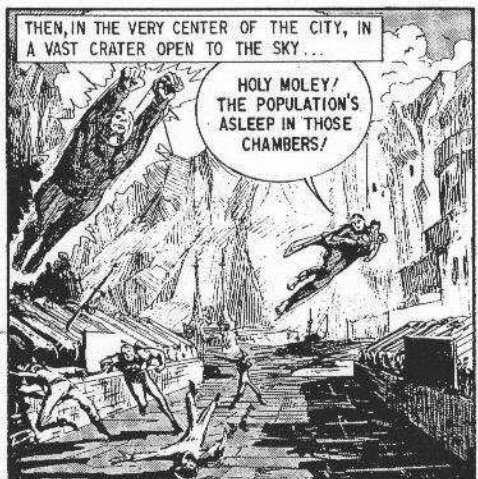
HEY!!!



JUST FORGET THE WHOLE MATTER! RETURNING TO OUR STORY, WE FIND THE PATROL SWOOPING THROUGH THE ENTRANCE TO TROGLODYTIA!

DON'T WORRY, MNEMO! THESE ARE UGLY CUSTOMERS, BUT WE CAN HANDLE 'EM!

Y-Y-YES SIR!



THEN, IN THE VERY CENTER OF THE CITY, IN A VAST CRATER OPEN TO THE SKY...

HOLY MOLEY! THE POPULATION'S ASLEEP IN THOSE CHAMBERS!



AND HERE ARE THE MARVELS! QUICK, MNEMO, SAY THE WORD!

SHAZAM?

CRASH



OMIGOSH! IT CHANGED YOU 'N NOT THEM!!

EVERYONE'S STILL ASLEEP—EVEN AFTER THAT THUNDERCLAP! THESE THINGS MUST BE HERMETICALLY SEALED!



WELL, YOU'D BETTER SAY IT AGAIN, SO CAPT. MARVEL CAN BREAK THE SHELLS AND ---

SH-SHA-SH-!!!



WHAT'S WRONG WITH Y--? DOOF!

SH-SH-SH-SHAZ-SHA-!!!



WHO ARE THE CHILDREN AND FOOLS WHO DARE TO INVADE THE FRONTIERS OF MINE EMPIRE?!

WOW!

THE C-CLAW!



NOW, YOU TOO SHALL SERVE THE CLAW!

YOU, UGLY, ARE IN FOR A BIG SURPRISE!



AND HERE'S WHERE YOU GET YOUR FINGERS BURNT!

THERE!

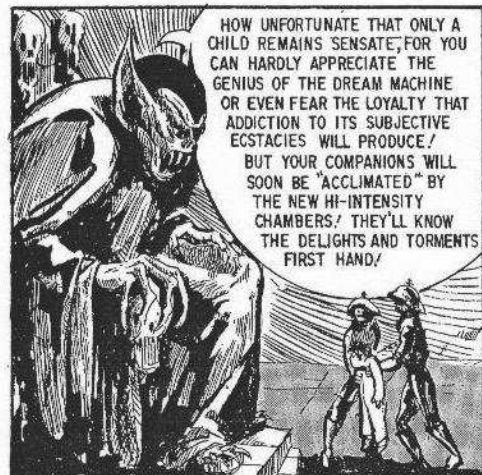
UNAWARE THAT HIS LEG IS LINKED TO THAT OF STEEL STERLING, FIREBRAND CLENCHES HIS FISTS ---

-- AND THERE IS AN INCANDESCENT FLASH AS AN INVINCIBLE CURRENT OF ELECTRICAL ENERGY ENCOUNTERS THE RESISTANCE OF THE INDESTRUCTIBLE BODY OF THE MAN OF STEEL!

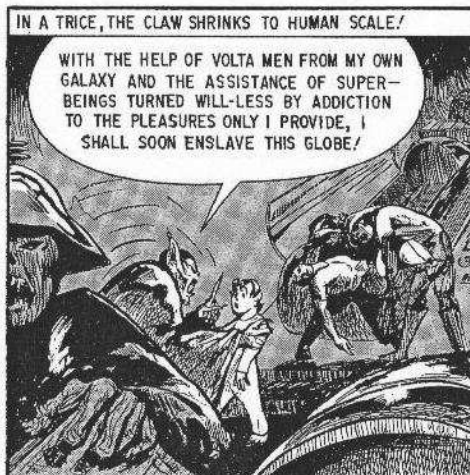


ARGRRR! YOUR CURSED PRANK WILL PAIN YOU FAR MORE THAN IT HAS ME!

BOTH OUT COLD!

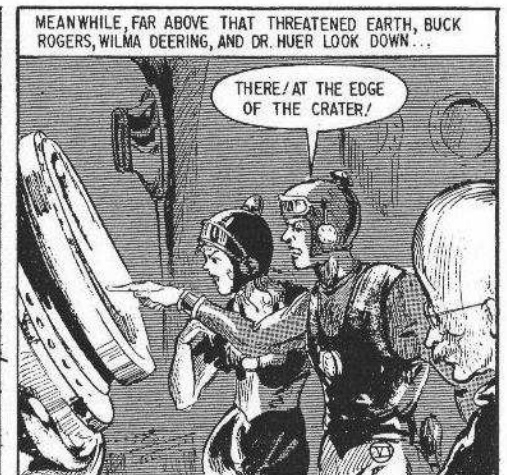


HOW UNFORTUNATE THAT ONLY A CHILD REMAINS SENSATE; FOR YOU CAN HARDLY APPRECIATE THE GENIUS OF THE DREAM MACHINE OR EVEN FEAR THE LOYALTY THAT ADDICTION TO ITS SUBJECTIVE ECSTASIES WILL PRODUCE! BUT YOUR COMPANIONS WILL SOON BE "ACCLIMATED" BY THE NEW HI-INTENSITY CHAMBERS! THEY'LL KNOW THE DELIGHTS AND TORMENTS FIRST HAND!



IN A TRICE, THE CLAW SHRINKS TO HUMAN SCALE!

WITH THE HELP OF VOLTA MEN FROM MY OWN GALAXY AND THE ASSISTANCE OF SUPER-BEINGS TURNED WILL-LESS BY ADDICTION TO THE PLEASURES ONLY I PROVIDE, I SHALL SOON ENSLAVE THIS GLOBE!



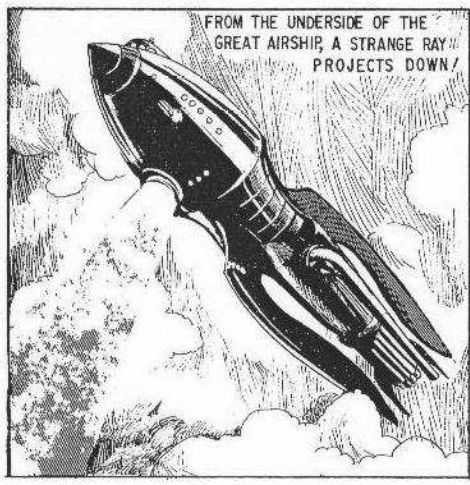
MEANWHILE, FAR ABOVE THAT THREATENED EARTH, BUCK ROGERS, WILMA DEERING, AND DR. HUER LOOK DOWN...

THERE! AT THE EDGE OF THE CRATER!

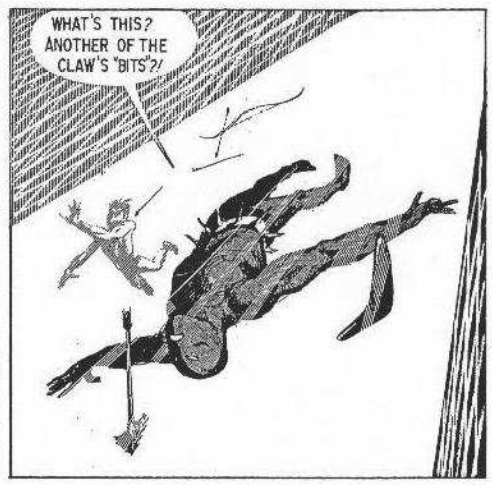


IT'S AN ARCHER SHOOTING AT DAREDEVIL!!!

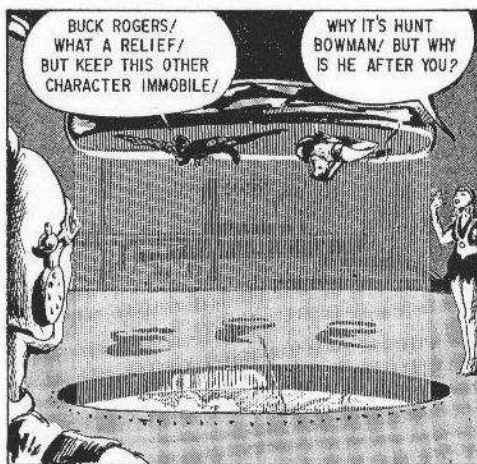
WILMA, PICK THEM UP WITH THE PARAMAGNET!



FROM THE UNDERSIDE OF THE GREAT AIRSHIP, A STRANGE RAY PROJECTS DOWN!

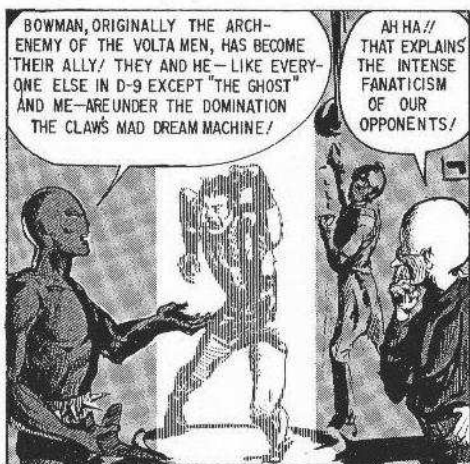


WHAT'S THIS? ANOTHER OF THE CLAW'S 'BITS'??!



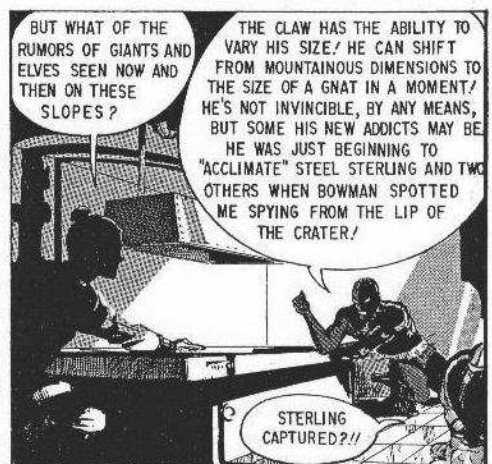
BUCK ROGERS! WHAT A RELIEF! BUT KEEP THIS OTHER CHARACTER IMMOBILE!

WHY IT'S HUNT BOWMAN! BUT WHY IS HE AFTER YOU?



BOWMAN, ORIGINALLY THE ARCH-ENEMY OF THE VOLTA MEN, HAS BECOME THEIR ALLY! THEY AND HE—LIKE EVERYONE ELSE IN D-9 EXCEPT "THE GHOST" AND ME—ARE UNDER THE DOMINATION OF THE CLAW'S MAD DREAM MACHINE!

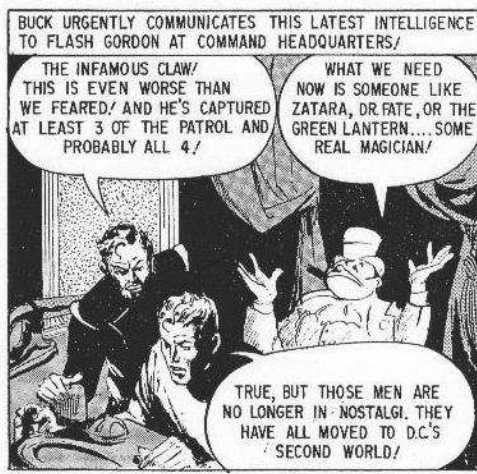
AH HA!! THAT EXPLAINS THE INTENSE FANATICISM OF OUR OPPONENTS!



BUT WHAT OF THE RUMORS OF GIANTS AND ELVES SEEN NOW AND THEN ON THESE SLOPES?

THE CLAW HAS THE ABILITY TO VARY HIS SIZE! HE CAN SHIFT FROM MOUNTAINOUS DIMENSIONS TO THE SIZE OF A GNAT IN A MOMENT! HE'S NOT INVINCIBLE, BY ANY MEANS, BUT SOME HIS NEW ADDICTS MAY BE HE WAS JUST BEGINNING TO "ACCLIMATE" STEEL STERLING AND TWO OTHERS WHEN BOWMAN SPOTTED ME SPYING FROM THE LIP OF THE CRATER!

STERLING CAPTURED??!



BUCK URGENTLY COMMUNICATES THIS LATEST INTELLIGENCE TO FLASH GORDON AT COMMAND HEADQUARTERS!

THE INFAMOUS CLAW! THIS IS EVEN WORSE THAN WE FEARED! AND HE'S CAPTURED AT LEAST 3 OF THE PATROL AND PROBABLY ALL 4!

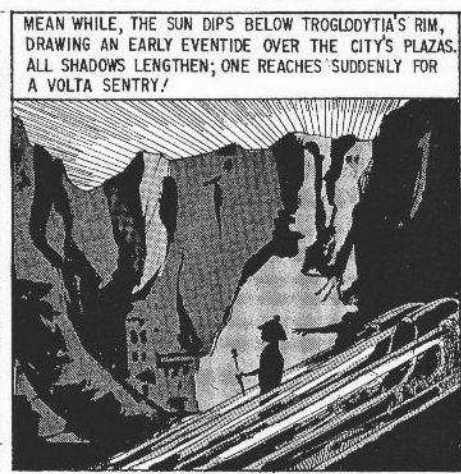
WHAT WE NEED NOW IS SOMEONE LIKE ZATARA, DR. FATE, OR THE GREEN LANTERN... SOME REAL MAGICIAN!

TRUE, BUT THOSE MEN ARE NO LONGER IN NOSTALGI. THEY HAVE ALL MOVED TO D.C.'S SECOND WORLD!



THAT BIRD'D BE SOME HELP THOUGH, WOULDN'T HE?

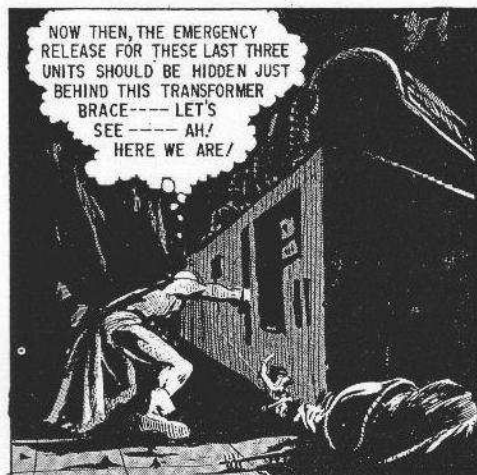
DR. SYNTH, FROM THE PLANET MO? HMMMM....



MEAN WHILE, THE SUN DIPS BELOW TROGLODYTTIA'S RIM, DRAWING AN EARLY EVENTIDE OVER THE CITY'S PLAZAS. ALL SHADOWS LENGTHEN; ONE REACHES 'SUDDENLY FOR A VOLTA SENTRY!



CLAW'S SWORN NEMESIS, THE GHOST, HAS STRUCK!



NOW THEN, THE EMERGENCY RELEASE FOR THESE LAST THREE UNITS SHOULD BE HIDDEN JUST BEHIND THIS TRANSFORMER BRACE---- LET'S SEE---- AH! HERE WE ARE!



WHA....? WOW! WHAT A DREAM I WAS HAVING!

YEAH, ME TOO... I'M ONLY A SIMPLE POWER LINEMAN! HOW'D I GET ON A TRIP LIKE THAT??!

BUT...WHERE'S MNEMO??!



THE LITTLE BOY IS IN THE CLAW'S CHAMBERS!

HOLY MOLEY, STEEL! LET'S GO!



YES, SMALL CREATURE, YOU WILL MAKE AN EXCELLENT PET!



WHA-- WHAT'S THIS?!

MR. STERLING-- AND BILLY BATSON/ SHAZAM!



KABOOM!

STOP!! ANOTHER MOVE AND THE WHELP DIES!

LOOK! THE CEILING SLID BACK!



FIREBRAND, CAN'T YOU--?

NO! THE SHOCK WOULD KILL BOTH!



JUST ONE MOMENT, CLAW!!!

WHA--? WHO?!!

IT-- IT'S A...



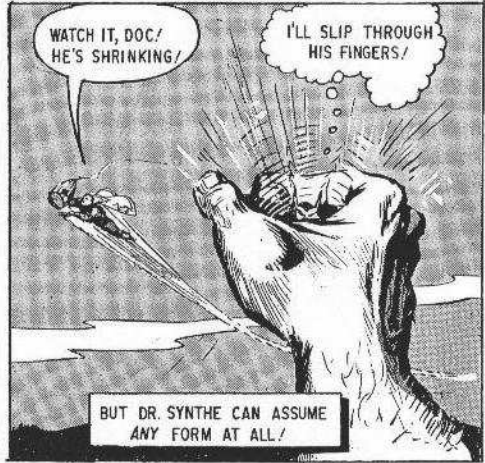
AS YOU SEE, WE OF THE PLANET MO CAN GROW ALSO!

GIANT...



?

HELP!



WATCH IT, DOC! HE'S SHRINKING!

I'LL SLIP THROUGH HIS FINGERS!

BUT DR. SYNTH CAN ASSUME ANY FORM AT ALL!



AND, SO, BECOMES A DENSELY MEMBERED CAGE!

CURSES!



BUT...

GIVE US BACK OUR LEADER!

GREAT SCOT! THE VOLTA MEN HAVE LET OUT THE MOB!



THEY'RE ALL ADDICTED TO THEIR FANTASIES! LET US SEE HOW YOU FARE AGAINST A LEGION THAT INCLUDES SHOCK GIBSON, THE IRON SKULL, MAGNO, BLUE BOLT, THE TWISTER....

SAY, THIS IS--

NO PROBLEM AT ALL, CAPTAIN! NO PROBLEM AT ALL!



PRINCE IBIS!

QUITE! I SHALL MERELY CALL UPON THE POWER OF THE IBISTICK! UNDO ALL THE HARM THAT THE CLAW'S RENASCENCE HAS DONE!

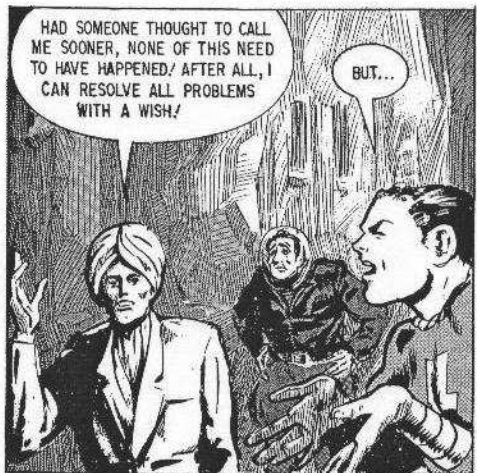


THERE!

HUH!

HI, STEEL! WHAT'S UP?

GOOD TO SEE YOU, CAP'N!



HAD SOMEONE THOUGHT TO CALL ME SOONER, NONE OF THIS NEED TO HAVE HAPPENED! AFTER ALL, I CAN RESOLVE ALL PROBLEMS WITH A WISH!

BUT...



PRECISELY! THERE'D HAVE BEEN NO STORY! BUT DO NOT FORGET THAT WITHOUT HUMAN RECOLLECTION NONE OF THIS COULD OCCUR! THERE SKULKS THE TRUE VILLAIN!

MNEMO?

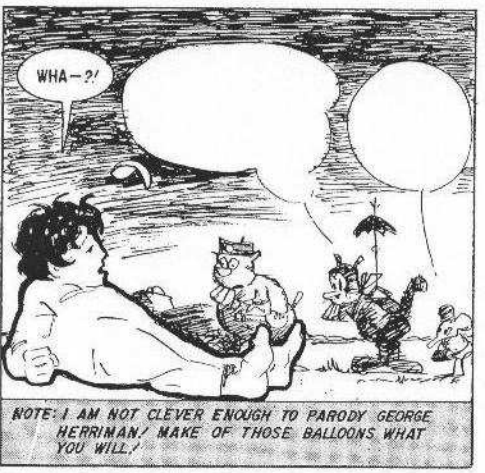


OF COURSE! 'T WAS HIS NIGHTMARE THAT BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE THE CLAW AND ALL OF HIS SATANIC CONTRIVANCES!

YEAH, BUT YOU WON'T EVEN BE A THING IF I DON'T "THINK" YOU!



MY DEMISE IS SMALL PRICE TO PAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF AN EVIL! AND SO, THEN, OFF WITH YOU TO A PLACE BEYOND RECALL!



WHA-?!

NOTE: I AM NOT CLEVER ENOUGH TO PARODY GEORGE HERRIMAN! MAKE OF THOSE BALLOONS WHAT YOU WILL!



HEY!



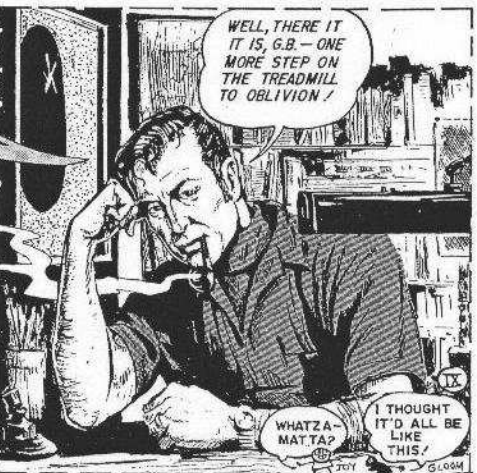
HELP!



MNEMO! WHAT'S GOING ON NOW?

NOTHING, PAPA!

WELL, BE QUIET ABOUT IT!



WELL, THERE IT IS, G.B. - ONE MORE STEP ON THE TREADMILL TO OBLIVION!

WHATZA-MATTA?

I THOUGHT IT'D ALL BE LIKE THIS!