

The following letter has been published in the "Under Observation" department of "CAPTAIN FUTURE":

A CHAT WITH FUTURE

By Edmond Hamilton

I thought maybe I ought to write you about a talk I had with Captain Future the other night.

What's that – do I talk with Captain Future? Sure I do! Where else do you suppose I learned the details of all his adventures. If not from Curt Newton himself?

How does he manage to talk with me, when he's far in the future from my own time? Well, as nearly as I can figure it out, he projects an achronic psycho-beam back along the time-dimension. It just happens that I'm able to pick up this mental message, and that's why he relies on me to tell his exploits to our own twentieth century. Of course, some people insist that I just imagine he sends those messages, and that I make it all up in my own mind. But I know better.

Anyway, the last time I heard from Captain Future, I mustered up courage and shot a question back at him.

I asked him, "Couldn't you be a little more specific about some of these scientific marvels you talk about? A number of people who read about your exploits would like to have some of these things explained in more detail."

"For instance?" he shot back. "Well, for instance, you refer to something called 'an ionoscope,'" I told him. "You tell me it's an instrument that can pick up a rocket-ship's space-trail by detecting its ionized discharge. But you don't tell how the ionoscope works."

"Why, that's simple," Curt assured me. "An ionoscope simply consists of four matched Wollensi electro-lenses, mounted in series between two Bradley filters –"

"Hold on a minute!" I begged. "That doesn't mean anything to me. I don't know what a Wollensi electro-lens or a Bradley filter are."

"Of course, you don't," he retorted. "Those instruments haven't even been thought of, back in your time. That's why I don't try to explain every detail of my own science to you. People of your age couldn't understand those details. Could you explain to one of the Pilgrim

Fathers just how a radio works? You could tell him what the radio did, but could you make him understand *how* it did it?"

"I guess not," I admitted.

"No more can I explain the detailed workings of the science of *my* time to the people of *yours*," Captain Future declared.

"I can understand that," I agreed. "But there's one other thing some people can't figure. Why is it you don't make use more often of some of the swell scientific weapons you acquired in your past exploits? Like the size-changing device you took off Ul Quorn, and the dematerializer you took away from the Space Emperor."

"Holy space-imps, I'd have to have a ship ten miles long to carry around *all* that stuff wherever I go!" Curt exclaimed. "And I wouldn't take them, even then. You see, those weapons and inventions are too dangerous for the System even to know about. That's why I wrested them away from their possessors. That's why I keep 'em locked up in the trophy-hall of our Moon-laboratory, where *nobody* will get his hands on them and use them to blow things apart. And they're going to stay there where they're safe."

"One more question," I begged, as I sensed he was about to sign off. "There's another chap somewhere around your time who seems to be sending back mental messages about his space-exploits, and adventures. He calls himself Sergeant Saturn. Did you ever hear of him?"

"Sergeant Saturn?" Captain Future laughed. "Sure, I've heard of him. He is a bibulous old Earthman, who was never out of the Solar System in his life. But he gets full of some crazy drink he invented called Xeno, and then goes out and tells gorgeous lies about his experiences in space. Out around the spacemen's joints from here to Pluto, they still say that nobody ever lived who could stretch the truth like Sergeant Saturn."

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