



NOW it is the turn of master sciencefictionist Edmond Hamilton to step into the spotlight and explain the whys and wherefores of how he got that way. His current novel, *OUTLAW WORLD*, is one of his best, so he wins his place with oak leaf clusters.

It's good to have the original creator of *Captain Future* back on the job again after a term in olive drab, not only to turn out more Curt Newtons, but to pen other pseudo-science and fantasy yarns in his inimitable



EDMOND HAMILTON

style, which is never drab. In case you are wondering what a science fiction author looks like, here is a picture of the man himself. And here's what he has to say:

One of the toughest jobs a writer has is trying to write a few lines about himself. I've tackled this chore a couple of times in the past, and each time I've found it harder than trying to do twice as many words of fiction.

When Joe Doakes, writer, sits down to do a little piece about himself, he finds himself smack on the horns of a dilemma. He can write a modest little piece intimating that he is a quiet guy who never did anything and doesn't deserve any notice. But if he does, the readers are likely to declare, "Doakes is a worm."

On the other hand, he can give subtle, not-too-blatant hints to the effect that he is a combination of D'Artagnan,

Casanova and Einstein. That will be interesting, all right. But those who read it will probably announce, "Doakes is an ego-tistic ass."

In an effort to-steer a middle course, I will simply give a few of the vital statistics and pass to more interesting subjects. The statistics – white and unmarried and a little too old for the military, say they; some two hundred-odd published stories behind me, and I hope some more ahead.

Until the war cut off civilian travel, I knocked around a good bit between Canada and Panama. But the only place I ever went back to five times is Mexico, where my variety of Spanish always puts people in stitches and does much to further good relations between the two countries. The tragedy of my life was when the tourists discovered Acapulco and living went up from a buck and a half a day to nine dollars.

The most interesting thing about any science-fiction writer, I should think, is why he does it – why he spends year after year writing fantastic stories. And believe it or not, the answer is childishly simple. It is because the writers are science-fiction fans, and the deepest dyed fans of all.

Perhaps that statement will be challenged by some of the younger fans. I've met a lot of them across the country, I think they're swell people and I've had a lot of good times with 'em. But I've never met any who had any deeper enthusiasm for fantasy fiction than the average s-f writer.

In my own case, though it sounds like a big lie, I was an enthusiastic science fiction fan before I could read. That was way back in the halcyon times years before World War One, when H. G. Wells published an article in the old *Metropolitan Magazine* called "The Things that Live on Mars." I couldn't decipher the text but the fantastic illustrations got me.

Later on, I graduated to the old weekly magazines that ran occasional fantasies. Julius Unger, that indefatigable bibliophile of science fiction, once dug up some of my own published fan-letters from those old journals and cast them in my teeth.

All that was a long time ago. I've done a lot of reading in three or four languages since then. But I will still always drop anything in my library for a new science-fiction story, and I still get as much blast out of a good one as ever.

The point that I'm trying to get over is that science-fiction writers turn out the stuff because they like it. If they didn't, they'd turn to the far easier existence of riveters or refrigerator-salesmen. And if anyone says that that would be wonderful, I here and now denounce him as a low character unworthy of fandom.