

Preface

Pioneers on this world have always been of two types.

First, the restless explorers who must learn what lies beyond the next mountain, in the depths of the next valley. Men who set no roots in any soil, build no homes, who exist only for the eternal quest, driven by the desire to see—see—

There were the "Long Rifles," the woodsrunning contemporaries of Kenton and Boone, the "Mountain Men" who were one with Carson and Bridger, the breakers of new trails. Often unstable of temperament, plagued by restlessness, they swept out to map and explore continents.

And when man reaches into space there shall rise other "Long Rifles" and "Mountain Men," granted new designations, perhaps, but of the same old breed. These shall chart dim trails between planet and planet, star and star, across alien worlds where human feet will leave new, strange tracks. And yet never shall they be satisfied, but their roving will continue, on and out, and up—

In the traces of the explorers tread the second type, the settlers, those who are willing to fight adverse climate, hostile natives, tough soil, to build new nations and civilizations. That same family group, which crossed the eastern mountains to claim "tomahawk rights" in the "dark and bloody ground," producing sons and daughters who, a generation later, dared to cross the plains in white-topped wagons, will be found again among the space-ship voyagers who go to break the soil of Venus, plow up the rusty red dust of Mars, trail out into the galaxy driven by the ancient hunger for new land, or because they are in active rebellion against conditions at home. They shall take root on those worlds the explorers have prospected, and will face down the nameless terrors and

dangers of the alien with the same stubborn spirit which kept earlier settlers steady at the loopholes in a fort's stockade.

Together go the pioneers of free space—the explorer and the settler—two arms of the same vigorous body—undefeatable by Man, alien or space itself!

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