

MLG 24

A Curfew Publication, edited by Larry Shaw, 1301 State Street, Schenectady, New York. Opinions expressed herein are those of the authors.

PURELY PERSONAL

by Leonard Marlow

We've just finished listening to the Bell Telephone 'Orchestra' utterly butcher Ravel's Bolero, and as a result we're in a bad mood. So beware, Ye Who Would Read Sweet Nothings. We're going to pour on the stuff this time.

First off, tho, we wish to hand a great big bouquet to an author --- or rather authoress --- who we think will really go places. We refer to Leigh Brackett, a gal who swings a mean typewriter. Her plots may be somewhat on the hackneyed side at times --- witness Citadel of Lost Ships --- but man, what magnificent writing! She turns a thud and blunder yarn into something that's really enjoyable reading. And to us that means something, because of late we've gotten into the habit of taking a story apart to see what makes it tick. Much of the stuff coming out of the mill today is so poorly written that in desperation we have turned to re-reading earlier stuff that we enjoyed. They're worth reading again and again, and they don't bore us 'n' all that stuff, but just the same we'd like to see a little more new stuff that's worth something.

A little more anent the science-less stories in ASTOUNDING. We believe that there's a lot of science in those stories that passes unrecognized as such by most readers. Not any down-to-earth physical science, perhaps, but very definitely science, nevertheless. Other mags have been printing what we consider utterly scienceless stories, and nobody said anything. Unexplained ray guns, rockets, etc. Where's the science in that?

Of course, it all hinges on what the individual means by science. We prefer the Heinlein type of story, and such stories as Hubbard's "Final Blackout", which had no Oh-Great-Klono-he's-got-a-dis-ray science whatsoever. Someone said that FINAL BLACKOUT wasn't fantasy, and we agree. It wasn't meant to be fantasy, it was S\*T\*F, and the two terms mean quite different things. The fact that it wasn't laid far enough in the future to show a scene much different from that of the present was unfortunate in that many readers, blinded by scads of super civilization stories, utterly refused to recognize it for the magnificent epic that it was.

The aforementioned individual also exposed the horrible fact that the Heinlein stories, after the gloss of different times and terms had been removed, had strictly present day plots. We tch! Dear sir, by far the great majority of stf tales have plots which are but strictly from the Westerns. Weinbaum, undeniably one of the finest authors science fiction has yet produced, stated that his formula for a successful story was to dress up a Western! And, tho this be rank heresy, we venture to state that were Weinbaum still with us, he would most probably be hacking out tripe with the worst of them. Reason? A magazine is sold to Mr. Average Reader, whose tastes disagree with those of Mr. Average Fanne. To make what might be considered a living, the Stf author generally has to write for the reader, you know. Readers just love tripe!

Larry's statement that fantasy was becoming his favorite reading matter leads us to make further observations in much the same vein as the above. We note that many more fans are turning to fantasy, and we, personally, have always preferred it to the average run of Stf. Naturally, all this is leading up to a theory of ours, which we herewith proudly produce.

We think that fantasy, by its very nature, is less restrained, less limited in scope than Stf. Or do we make ourselves muddy? Probably. Well, the idea we're attempting to convey is that the fan who can't find Stf. that suits him, because it doesn't fit his ideas of what Stf should be or just isn't well written, will usually like fantasy because he realizes that it does not need to be confined to a set pattern in any way. And since the field is more limited, stories as a rule are better written.

Back to Weinbaum: we were more than mildly astonished to see that Palmer printed The New Adam in AMZ; it just doesn't fit the mag at all. When the story first appeared in book form, we were misled into believing that it wasn't worth reading, so we didn't buy it (much to our regret). We found it to be a magnificent work, easily surpassing Pygmalion's Spectacles, which we had previously considered Weinbaum's best. Orchids to Palmer for using it.

And now, may we rant for awhile? This has to do with a trend in fan mags that is becoming increasingly evident as time goes by. As an example, Joe Fanne has just come back from the Third Annual 'Frisco Fantasy Fools' Convention, and, full of enthusiasm, pounded out an account of the occurrence for his mag, Stf Stuff. (This is not directed at the San Francisco fans, either individually or collectively. We just couldn't resist using that combination.) Upon perusing the write up, we discover that upon arriving the evening before the convention, Joe first looked up five of the Fantasy Fools and then they all looked up a bar. Somewhere along the line, Joe suddenly discovered that he was a rocket ship about to take off for Mars, and found the bar a very appropriate spot for his takeoff. Scooping Joe's bruised and battered body up off the floor, the Fantasy Fools set out in search of women.

Next morning, Joe, sustaining a horrible hangover, is rudely awakened at the ungodly hour of nine A. M., and dragged to the convention hall. First on the program is the business meeting of the Fantasy Fools, and the secretary is called upon to read the minutes of the previous meeting. The secretary has no more than staggered to his feet when a voice from the rear of the hall calls, "Mr. Chairman, I move that we dispense with the reading of the minutes." Someone seconds the motion, the entire meeting is adjourned, and from then on any attempts at anything serious are immediately and thoroughly suppressed.

Now comes an interval in which all present are supposed to give a short talk on "What Science Fiction and this Convention Mean". Joe's turn comes at last, and he stumbles nervously up the aisle. Facing the laughing, gayly gabbing crowd, he utters these heartfelt words, "Splrf-sk!" Joe returns to his seat amid thunderous applause.

By now Joe's mind is in such a whirl that he can remember little of what happens in the following hours, but outstanding is the truly heartwarming scene of Jake Glutch, 'The Minnesota Redcap', giving the president of the FF the most colossal hotfoot of all time. After the blaze has been extinguished, the president avows that he always liked short pants anyway.

He also has a fond memory of Barney Fleward, #1 fan, who imparted to him the following sterling words of wisdom, "Gug is Gug, and since his All-Permeance of the Universe denies the Plurality of Causes, Gug is therefore obliterated thru his ultimate Oneness. Gug is Gug. Heil Gug!"

But all good things must come to an end, and finally Joe wends his

weary way homeward, retaining to his dying day a mental picture of the glorious occasion.

Exaggerated? Yes, but not unduly, we think. We don't intend to contest the right of Joe and the Fantasy Fools to drink, etc. In fact, we'd be among the first to acknowledge it, but we would also like to protest against turning a science fiction convention into a glorified free for all in such a manner, and the fact that most fan articles on such conventions stress that angle. If you were a serious minded individual, with a real interest in science and science-fiction, would you be anxious to become associated with such a group?

---

## SAYINGS OF THE SPENCE

Quarterly Quibblings

by Paul Spencer

This is one way of getting out of the disgrace (and, just incidentally, the work) of putting out a single-sheet fanzine. Instead of sallying forth under my own auspices, I take shelter under the obliging wing of Caliban. (Mixed metaphors are a specialty of mine.) Seriously, I am invading the pages of Larry Shaw's hitherto inoffensive fanzine for the simple reason that it is mechanically impossible for me to place my ideas in a publication of my own, of any number of sheets. For now I, too, am in the army. This first column is being written at home, but future ones, if such there be, will come from Camp X. And now to the fray.

Consider, friends, the Winter mailing. Isn't it a sight to warm the heart? After that middling little excuse for a mailing fostered on us last fall, this some-and-a-score of really stimulating fanzines is a delightful contrast. So much, and so good! Notice the newcomers -- Mutant, different, well produced, and generally meritorious save that there isn't more of it; Fan-Tods, a swell start both as to material and as to mimeoing; and, last but of course not least, Caliban. I suppose if I wax enthusiastic over the latter, it will seem somewhat suspicious, but honest, didn't YOU think it was great? These new mags are all astonishingly well laid-out -- in fact, the fellows new to the field are doing, generally, better work than the oldsters, insofar as format is concerned. The Old Guard came through also, though -- especially Speer, with three items, all interesting. As usual, En Garde and SusPro are tops in the mailing.

Now for slams, all aimed at a rather poorly hectored mag renamed Pogorus. Now, Fan-Damn impressed me rather favorably, but this thing is too much! There is, to be sure, some good material in it -- but take the editorial, for example; its cynical, know-it-all attitude is both irritating and transparent. What earthly good do such things accomplish? It seems to me that we've cast enough dirt at ourselves recently, and the Woods have finally gone over the line from healthy self-examination to destructive criticism. The answer to Lickerish, also, is cheap, and 4sJ answered most of the arguments well enough in his recent single-sheeter (which, however, also displayed poor taste). But what really gets my goat about Pogorus is its vile, idiotic chauvinism. It is one thing to respect the ideals for which we are fighting, and to love our country; to boast about it is something else. Even more offensive than this holier-than-thou attitude are such phrases as "Good Japs are dead Japs; let's make good Japs" and "conscientious objector (pronounced yella-belly)." No-one with the intelligence I have always thought fans possessed would display such narrow-

mindedness. It may be trite to say so, but such ideas are the stuff that fascism feeds on -- condemnation of "inferior races" and anyone who holds opinions other than your own. If this is the last we hear of Fogurus, I for one will shed no tears.

STIRRINGS CIENCE STORIES ESSAY DISSED STIRRINGS CIENCE STORIES ESSAY DISSED STIRRINGS

Turning now to the mailing you're at present examining, let us consider the current issue of The Nucleus. Boldly displayed on the final page of this otherwise admirable publication is an article under my name. That article needs explanation and apology. I wrote it, for one thing, long and long ago, at a time when Trudy was hollering madly for something to fill out an issue; and consequently it is not exactly the product of inspiration. Hence that peculiar odor it emits. (Why Trudy condescends to use it now, and didn't in the first place, I don't know -- maybe the filler situation is worse now than it used to be.)

Moreover, in order to fit the thing onto the page, La Kuslan found it necessary to make one excision -- only one, but a big and important one. An entire paragraph is omitted, which accounts for the odd way you lose the thread of my thought. Unhappily, I've forgotten what the paragraph said, so the article must stand (or fall) in its present mutilated form. In any event, it fulfills its main function, and neatly fills up the page.

SOME FANS ARE CRAZY SOME FANS ARE CRAZY SOME FANS ARE CRAZY SOME FANS ARE CRAZY SOME FANS ARE CRAZY

Those of you who have the records of the "Things to Come" music and do not know what parts of the music go with which parts of the film, gather ye round, whilst The Spence expounds the knowledge gleaned from his recent witnessing of a revival of THE scientifilm. The first record surface, you will recall, is labelled "Ballet for Children." The general impression is that it accompanies Horrie Passworthy as he beats his toy drum, and the shadows of marching soldiers appear behind him. That idea is erroneous (I am sad to say, for the music fits the scene perfectly). Actually, the whole thing, march theme and all, accompanies the scene around the Christmas tree, chattering on behind the conversation.

Part 2 is labelled "Pestilence." This actually is concert music for the pestilence scenes, the latter part accompanying the scene where the sick girl rises tottering from her bed and wanders off.

"Attack" contains music heard in the air raid, in the quiet moments of the development of the war, and in the pestilence scenes. The theme which opens this side is associated with the wanderers' strife on with the disease.

"The World in Ruins" appears in the "Warrior Chief" section, well as in the pestilence scenes.

"March" opens with a passage from the opening of the film (the subtle menace in the Christmas shopping scene), continues with the scene where the city prepares for the air raid, and then goes into the main march theme (syncopated) which is associated with the chief, as are the two quieter and more dignified themes. My discoveries about this section were particularly disheartening, because I had it all figured out that this music portrayed -- and very vividly -- the transition period, with the new machines tearing down the ruins and building up the new world. However, I do feel that the brilliant march theme is a masterpiece of characterization, displaying all the swagger and superficial brilliancy of the Chief, as well as his fundamental mediocrity.

The "Epilogue" is what I expected: it goes with the closing scene, in the observatory. However, there is one difference -- the chorus introduced at the end is longer and better than the one in the film.

Incidentally, has anyone made out the words sung here? In the film, they're "Which shall it be?" but on the record they sound fuzzily like "All the starry sky -- eternity!"

MOSTFANSARENICEMOSTFANSARENICEMOSTFANSARENICEMOSTFANSARENICEMOSTFANSARE

While on the subject of fantasy films, allow me to make a few observations on that much-maligned musical, "I Married an Angel." Now, I'm not claiming that this film is top-notch fantasy -- I imagine most fans turn sickly green at the thought of the Eddy-MacDonald combination and all it implies -- but it does contain a number of unusual things worthy of mention.

As you probably know, the film differed radically from the stage version in that the whole fantasy episode is made a dream. This might have been simply a cliché to make the story more credible; but Anita Loos, who wrote the script, seems to have a gratifying amount of imagination. For by making this change, she turned "I Married an Angel" into a piece of dream-psychology which might (I do not say would) have delighted the heart of Sigmund Freud. The seemingly unreasonable yet subtly logical madness of the subconscious world is perfectly presented. People are symbolically characterized -- a stiff, over-formal fop goes about with his head held straight in a vise. Actions also are accompanied by curious symbols: as Eddy's angel wife, not comprehending human foibles, throws his party into a riot by her naive frankness, a monkey wrench appears abruptly in her hand. As the film goes on, things get more and more unreasonable, the element of causality goes screwy, everything becomes strange, sinister, and insecure, and finally all spins off in sheer nightmare. Naturally, all the psychology is kept secondary to the story, the humor, and the music, but considering the class of film to which it belongs, "I Married an Angel" contains a lot of stimulating stuff.

Incidentally, while the bulk of the music is pretty dull, we get two operatic arias (the Habanera from "Carmen" and the Frison Scene from "Faust") as well as one interesting experiment: an entire purely dramatic scene in recitative.

Why in heaven's name did all the write-ups of this picture fail to mention these things?

And, to polish off the subject of fantasy films, I might mention that at this writing there is going the rounds a definitely fantastic film called "The Devil with Hitler." It's wish-fulfillment slapstick, with Hitler, Mussolini, and some bespectacled Joe getting into all kinds of trouble because of the presence of his Satanic Majesty in person.

SFLICSCISAFS NYLASEFSIFSTAPARTFFSFLPFFSSTFISGSPHSTFANICALUUNSTFALA WERTY

The future of this column is, of course, exceedingly vague. How much time and thought I'll give to stuff while I'm in the army is a question on which I don't wish to commit myself; and I have no desire to prophesy whether the next quarter, or the one after that, will produce any further quibblings of The Spence.

But I'm hoping.

TEATSALLTHEREISTHEREAIN'TNOMORETATSALLTHEREISINDBOYARINTYOUGLADTHOUGH?

APOLOGY

by Larry Shaw

There was going to be a Caliban in the March mailing. Millions of things interfered, and I didn't get it done in time. As it didn't appear that I'd have it done in time for a reasonably early post-mailing, either, I chucked it. Two things in the dummy seemed too good to waste, however: the two columns you've just read.

So I decided on an emergency pub, Banshee. I dummied it. Then more things interferred. It got later. The brief editorial I had written became outdated. I wrote another. Time zipped by and I didn't get any stenciling done. It is now Saturday, May 8, and I have stenciled the whole mag this mornig. I'm writing this as I stencil, as the second editorial was also outdated. Anyway, I'm terribly sorry about the extreme lateness of this issue, and I apologize because it isn't at all what it should be.

I'll run this off this afternoon and mail it Monday. However, I'd better apologize for the probable crummy appearance here, also. My mimeo hasn't been working at all well lately. I haven't had time to pry into it to discover the cause, so I don't know whether the mimooing of this will stink or not. It probably will.

There will be a Caliban in the next mailing. It may be late, but not too late. Two more installments of columns are on hand, and I have a lot of things to say myself. It won't be an elaborate issue. There won't be time to make up a complete dummy, and there won't be any party Bok covers, and so fo'th. But there will be plenty of meat in it. I'm also going to have the fourth Leprechaun out before I'm drafted in July or die in the attempt. All youse guys will get it free, of course.

The new handle, "Curfew Pubs", on my magazines has no meaning. At least, it wasn't meant to have when I made it up some time ago. I just liked the sound of it a lot better than Electricity pubs, which had a double meaning but which somehow didn't please me at all. "Curfew" will distinguish all my junk from now on. There never will be a real curfew to my publishing, because I'm as much interested in publishing itself as I am in stf and fantasy. I even have high hopes for finding a means of publishing some worthwhile stuff while I'm in the army. I never can tell till you try . . .

Well, please be sweet about this and consider Banshee a part of the March mailing. In the meantime, I'll be back in a flash with some trash.

from: Larry Shaw  
1301 State Street  
Schenectady, New York

Mimeographed magazine  
Return postage guaranteed

TO:

Norman Stanley  
43A Broad St.  
Rockland  
Maine



NE ADY



in love with him, and the disassociated shade and body of said maidens pass to the depths of the underworld, landing in the Hades of the vivisectionist and religious inquisitor of all creeds. Somehow the whole set-up rather reminds me of the underworld scenes in Shaw's "Man and Superman". Our couple wander thru the afterworld trying to get home again, picking up an ancient Welsh Seer and hard en voyage. The whole being copiously interlarded with introspective sermons ahent the Powys attitude to lifw in general. Yet I en- the book and liked its style, and would recommend it to the literary weird- ists in fandom. Published Cassell, 1937, 7/6. pp322.

PAGING MILTY Another unknown-to-fandom book, which curiously I have had squatted away since my pre-collecting days, is an early "super- man" type of story. "Drummer of the Dawn" by Raymond Paton (Chapman & Hall, 6/-; I have the 2nd edition dated 1914). Modestly entitling his diminutive hero merely "a child of Genius", the writer deals with some three years of his life, from the age of 11 to 14 when he is killed - in Algeria of all pl- aces. "Tinwhumpinny" is most interesting and his forte is the production of quite original views on the fact and purpose of life. One of his most intr- igring statements is that he posses a brain (or thinking entity) in each knee, one in his head, one at the root of his tongue, but the chiefest is in his diaphragm. He has one other brain but would be considered unconventional if he referred to it. The book forms quite an interesting contrast to "The Lew Adam" which I had read just previously; and to "Odd John" too. Sheer insight is apparently yet another desirable faculty for the superman. This is a first novel but was followed by "The Tale of Lal: A Fantasy" (Chapman & Hall 1914 6/-) -- "Is Sir J.M. Barrie may constitute himself perpetual freeman of Kensington Gardens, and Mr Rackham cram it with elves and gnomes, if G.K.C. may Napoleonically storm Notting Hill, and suspend a wizard by his eyelashes from the cross of St Pauls, why should not Mr Paton wave a magic wand over Trafalgar Square". Yes, apparently a fantasy work !!!

CHATTER Thank you to H. C. Koenig for the note in Reader & Collector re the fantasy works of Robert W. Chambers; which cleared up a knotty point for me. I have already "The King in Yellow" & "In Search of the Unk- nown"; and think the latter deserves a special plug not only for its general satirical treatment of scientific exploration yarns but for the sheer im- pudence of that pious foreword. Now I can try for t'other two books "The Maker of Moons" & "The Tree of Heaven" ... copies of this sheet will go to a few of my friends here in England so I shall introduce titles of books rather frequently so that said books can then be shoved on assorted want- lists. Sitha? ... In self-defence I would like to say that I did actually send off 50 copies of a 4 page sheet reprinting some illustrations by Harry Turner, to the then mailing secretary about August 1941. They never arrove. Moreover, receipt of the first issue of Sound Off lead me to attempt a con- tribution, which was despatched by airmail to the editor. I didn't hear another word. Just my luck if this thing gets sunk ... If any Fapafans want 'em there still are available here copies of Stapledon's "Starmaker" at 50c approx. Also J.W. Dunne's thought-provoking non-fiction work "Experiment with Time" at the same price. Will swap for prozines of preferably, some of the many American books I would like... Wish there were some way I could slide in with that Book Club of yours, Liebsher... By the time you are reading this I hope that there will be in existence a "Bibliophiles Section" of the British Fantasy Society, passing round its own chainletter and comparing notes on this, that and t'other. Before I finish; any Yanks desircus of copi- es of the forthcoming science fiction series consisting of reprints of 5 Benson "Herbert yarns, issued at 6d each (about 10 cents). Good Reading all.