

SCI-FIC

Published FAPA-chalantly
by ye olde Bob Tucker

VARIETY

Number 6
June 1942

Anent, re, and
much ado about

Stirring (?)
Science
Stories (?)

In our March issue, as perchance you may remember if your memory runs back that far, we reported upon the general state of the great god STF, as he is practiced in this central Illinois hamlet. We said that we were unable to obtain certain promags here because the newsstands don't co-operate. Pray let us hasten to amend that statement, in part:

One of the mags we were unable to obtain was DAW's Stirring Science. After the actual writing of that statement, we discovered that the local stands were now selling it -- and for some reason which we cannot now explain even to ourself, we bought one. "Odds bodkins!" the little wife exclaimed when we toted it home, "what are you going to do with that?" This momentarily stumped us. But the usual Tucker genius flashed to the fore, and we retorted snappily: "Oh, I dunno. I thought maybe it would look nice on the mantle."

Meanwhile, EEEvans, who had received an advance page of Variety, took pity on us and mailed us another copy. Gee, we now had two copies! Should we read both of them, word for word, to determine if there existed even the slightest difference between them? Mayhap, during the press run, some of the type had slipped, and where ONE copy would read: "A body about ten thousand miles away, a small body. Presumably another wandering asteroid."; the SECOND copy would read: "A body about ten miles away, a small body. Presumably a wandering--". Pardon us. We had better not finish that. We don't wish to be accused of spreading pornography in the dear FAPA.

So there we were with two copies on our hands. But again meanwhile, we had written a pleasant little note to DAW's publishers, proclaiming our undying love for DAW on one hand, and asking "what about our subscription to Cosmic and Stirring" on the other. Back came a note from someone, informing that they were having more trouble with Stirring than is ordinarily due a STF publisher, and would we please be patient a while longer? A few days later they sent us a copy, making the third such on hand.

But do you think our yarn ends there? If so, you are badly mistaken. The following week they sent us another copy of the same March issue. So now we have four. Four copies, all arrayed on the mantle. The kids can't understand this and think we are decorating for an early Xmas.

We can't understand it either. Suppose they keep sending us duplicate copies each and every week of the year? Maybe they are going to expire our subscription in a hurry by sending us twelve copies of this one issue? What a horrible, horrible fate!--the little man hissed.

One evening when we were idly sitting around wondering what to do, we caught sight of the four copies and a dangerous, foolhardy thought crept into our mind: why not read one? It would be treason to the cause, to be sure, but then there was little danger of another fan happening in to catch us in the nefarious act.

To cut a novel into novelette size, we did. Using a secret method of our own, we chose a copy and considered the cover. A blurb in a box said that our old friend Gottesman was represented therein by "The Perfect Invasion", an astounding novelette of galactic warfare. So we read it. We beg to report the pictures by Dolgov were nice.

"An astounding novelette" indeed! It astounds us that Gottesman wrote the thing, and we are further astounded that Wollheim printed it. (We wish to take time out here to develop a sidetrack that has some bearing on the case, to wit:)

In the little private world in which we revolve and think our thots we quite naturally have some strong likes and dislikes. For instance, the manner of writing. "Style," some people call it. We find the style of HL Mencken delightful, as in his book Newspaper Days. On the other hand, Moses Koenigsberg in his book, King News, is annoying. This chap Moses will never say, simply, "a mixed mob" when speaking of a colorful group of people. He prefers to show his education and intelligence by saying "a heterogeneous horde". Spread such as that over five hundred pages and you finish the book hating the guy to pieces. Moses is/was annoying.

So is Gottesman, to our ears/eyes. The telling of "Perfect Invasion" annoyed us exceedingly. We regarded it as nothing more than running narrative, completely devoid of drama, interest, entertainment, inspiration or anything else! It reminded us again and again of the story written by the 11-year-old Ackerman, "The Madman of Mars", as was presented in the March mailing. To us, it seemed to be written by an eleven-year-old, for eleven-year-olds. A boring, dry recital.

Disregarding the length, we doubt if any but the worst-off (?) fanzines would have accepted the yarn for publication. There have been many, many bad stories written for fanzines (and prozines); and we have undoubtedly written our share of the stinkers, but Wollheim is supposed to be occupying the editorial seat for one reason: to edit. That also means to reject. We charge he failed in his duty.

So, we're sorry for Gottesman's sake, whom we love dearly ... well, almost dearly; and we're sorry for DAW's sake, whom we love dearly... well, almost dearly; but we can only sigh and put the magazine back on the mantle with the other three copies. We have ample proof that both could do better; we can only say that we know now what somebody meant when they said that Stirring belonged with the comic books.

CONTROVERSY NOTE: We are in favor of adding ten non-active members to the FAPA --- at five dollars per head. We herewith submit a wonderful plan to relieve ourselves (the fifty, hard-working members) of all financial responsibility:

Admit these ten newcomers at \$5 each. Their fifty dollars per year will run the FAPA and then some ---- it takes in only \$37.00 per year now. Therefore, as soon as they are admitted, the active fifty members can stop paying dues. We will enjoy the FAPA for nothing while the elite ten who read our efforts will pay all the expenses. There were 28 items in the March bundle. It should be easy to convince ten Moneybags' that five bucks is a cheap price to pay for 112 fanzines a year. Why, it is as easy as falling off a log in zero gravity.

Jinx, we thought, was the best item in the bundle, replacing all our old favorites. This may be a pungent statement, but it was as good as a non-FAFA subscription fanzine. We found a deep humor in the Jenkins-Koenig "war" which we suspect will not be shared by others. We couldn't help thinking, all thru the warring pages, that Jenkins typed them with his tongue in his cheek, a smirk upon his fair face, mumbling something to the effect: "move over Pong, here comes Jenkie!"

"What's Wrong With Fan Fiction" as explained by Joe Fortier and Joe Gilbert amused us. Someday when we have sold a good many more yarns (in order to have a firm footing under us, you understand), we want to rear up and point out what's wrong with fan fiction. At the present time we smirk everytime a fan pops up with such a question. We recall Gilbert once turned thumbs down on Jack Woodford and his methods of writing. Yet, of the four yarns we've sold (at this writing), all followed the basic pattern laid down by Woodford. The guy must have something on the ball. In fact, we think most writing instructors have something --- but the individual striving to write must seek out and correctly interpret that something. It is quite possible that what we found in Woodford is not what Gilbert found in him.

One more comment on this before retiring. In defiance of Gilbert's advice not to read writers' books, we suggest you read Dorothea Brande's Becoming a Writer (Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1934). You won't find yourself being persuaded to forget about writing and go out and be a milkman, in the very first (or any other) chapter. She handles you, Joe would-be writer, very intelligently.

In Koenig's Reader & Collector, we'd like to recall your attention to the first item he mentions in his March issue. It concerns "old man" Evans going into semi-hysterics over our wife and Doc Smith's daughter. Koenig cautions him to take it easy, and in the same breath asks about two other females, Abby Lu Ashley and Kay Becker.

Well, Kernal Koenig old chum, let us tell you a story about Abby Lu. When we were up there last November, it surprised us no end to find that Al Ashley's wife was almost literally "our wife". First Evans would throw his arms about her and kiss her, then Jack Wiedenbeck would do likewise, and-so-help-me-hannah, so did Walt Liebscher! We are afraid we stared goggle-eyed at all this. We looked askance at Al, and he shrugged his shoulders as if to say: "Shux. Every fan in the state of Michigan does it -- and some in Illinois!"

Calling into play our great strength of character and mighty will power, we did not kiss her. And we fancy that, as we left town, Al looked at us with something approaching respect and awe, not to mention appreciation in his eye. We like to believe that he regards us as but a shade removed from Superman, so successfully did we fend off the wiles of his red-headed wife.

Confidentially; Kernal, we'd love to introduce you to her sometime. It would be interesting to determine the depth of YOUR will power. We can just picture you, whirling about, announcing to the others in the room your experience, to wit: "I've kissed her!" he hissed in joyous rapture, "I've just kissed her. Eureka!"

Edgar Allan Martin's Satyric: Checking up on figures in the two previous mailings, we find that his membership almost expired. Which fact duly explains Satyric. We weep.

In Fortier's California Mercury #11, the prices on his fanzines caught our attention, especially when we read that the top price, \$3.50, was wanted for LeZ. We joyed. Untill we found that, broken down, it averaged about 10½ cents per issue. We weeped. Joe, we think it a scurvy trick in numbering the opposite side of the paper another issue. We don't feel that a Mercury #12 was needed, when #11 would serve. Sorry to see you leaving, but brother, we'll take a little bet

Sustaining Pogrom (that is not an error, pliz), which came in after the mailing, more interesting than usual. Perhaps it was because we read more sense and direction into the thing. Instead of any given paragraf referring to nothing whatsoever, we are pleased to report that we now find it only half refers to nothing whatsoever.

The interlineations on page 4 are amusing, but we didn't know Wilson was married. Or perhaps Speer isn't referring to the same Wilson we are. Maybe he isn't even referring to marriage. Drat all people who talk between the lines!

uptuckerdownspeerruptuckerdownspeerruptuckerdownspeerruptuckerdownspeerr!

WHAT HO! - THE PRESS: In an issue of the Bloomington Advertiser, the local weekly, we found the following item in the "For Sale - miscellaneous" column:

A good second-hand "Chic Sales", a three-holer.
311 Wall street, Bloomington.

Okay Koenig, you don't need to yell so loud. We know it ain't stf ! But won't you at least admit it's fantastic?

BOOKS: In connection with Jurgen, we'd like to pass along the following, taken from Burton Rascoe's book column in the Chicago Sun:

"During the furor of the suppression, trial and release of Jurgen, and afterward, when the book reached a sale of 100,000 copies within a few months, largely out of the curiosity of the prurient, I received (as dedicatee of the book) an average of 20 letters a week in which the correspondent would invariably quote some particularly beautiful and lofty, as well as innocent, passage and ask me what was the true meaning of this passage and didn't it mean something especially dirty?

"As a result of the kind of publicity Jurgen got from the unsuccessful action of the Society for the Suppression of Vice against it, women (who had read the book as superficially as had many reviewers--looking for what they thought they could identify as smut and ignoring all else) wrote to Cabell proposing that they set up housekeeping with him without benefit of marriage, and even dropped off the trains in Richmond and came out to the Cabell home to make their proposals in person.

"There they were always graciously greeted by Mrs Cabell and served the special cocktail Mrs Cabell shakes up herself Then ..(she) would instruct the Negro butler to disturb Mr Cabell at his work and make him come down . . . and greet a charming visitor. The gal would meet a handsome, quiet, courteous gentleman, who tactfully conveyed the information that Jurgen was not a book advocating adultery, but, on the contrary, one which, if it had any particular message at all, was an argument against both adultery and divorce.

"The gals . . . would catch the next train home, not merely disillusioned, but convinced . . . that Cabell was crazy. To the gals, this didn't make sense. They confuse imaginative art with the private life of the artist.

(continued, next page)

(Cabell - continued:)

/5/

"They are the sort of women who might have broken in on Shakes - peare in his boarding house near the Globe, after seeing "The Taming of the Shrew," and demanded, "Bring out your whip! Here I am!" "

MORE BOOKS: Let us recommend The Turn of the Screw, by Henry James; a little book published by The Modern Library (Random House) for 95¢. We found it a weird yarn that is literature.

World D, which Liebscher picked up for us at a bargain counter in Chi cago, is a yarn that would be labelled "nova" or "thought-variant" in Astounding. World D, written and published in England, handled in this country by Sheed & Ward (NYC - 1935) is the tale of a wonder-world in a bubble, hidden deep beneath the Indian Ocean in molten rock. The founder has foreseen the end of the world (civilization) and makes his usual preparations of course. He has located three other worlds in space having intelligence, and a communication beam similar to his. Altho he needs their help to survive, he cannot get it because: of the three worlds, one cannot help because it is below his scientific en - deavors, the second wants to but cannot because to do so would kill them, and the third refuses to answer. He knows the third is there only because he picks up their "beam" as the world revolves. The cli - max comes when World D (Polaris) finally does communicate --- but in a way that brings near-disaster.

We intend to cover the book more fully in our book column in some fut - ure Fantasite. Altho written by J.K. Heydon, it is credited to Hal P. Trevarthen, a character in the story, who is the official historian.

Another book we recommend is Wm Sloane's To Walk The Night (Farrar & Rinehart, 1937). It keeps you guessing up to the last ten pages. By turns, you'll believe it is a vampire tale, a detective whodunit, a supernatural thriller and what have you. You're all wrong. It's a time traveling tale. But instead of us going there, she comes here!

Phil Stong's (the Futurians don't like it) Other Worlds (Wilfred Funk, 1941) has been selected by a book club, and is also out in a \$1 edition. The same book club (Doubleday Dollar Club) also issued Hux - ley's After Many a Summer Dies The Swan. (Harper's, 1939).

WANTS: We are interested in getting The Story of Prophecy by H.J. For - man; Invasion from Mars by Hadley Cantril; Witchcraft by Wm. Seabrook; Presenting Moonshine by John Collyer; and Tom (and) Swoop by James, if you have them for sale, at a reasonable figure.

.....
EXPERIMENT: Somewhere, in some fanzine, sometime or other, we read of how Morojo abandoned smoking because she found it not only improved her health but added to the general excellence of her work ---- for instance, she found her typing improved. With this in mind, we tried an experiment. We fastened together, end on end, four nickle cigars, two menthol cigarettes, and a plug of chewing tobacco. On this was sprinkled kerosene to make them burn faster. Then, after inseting the paper in the typewriter, we sat down and lit up.

When everything was consumed down to the chewing tobacco, we examined the paper and found we had written a 125,000 word Gray Lensman novel on one sheet of paper, in about 30 minutes time, and that we had def - initely killed off the Lensman. Furthermore, the story was written in Sanskrit, which we never could read or write or speak anyway. Kismet!

"I'DE RATHER BE YOU" (A POME)

If I had my wish I wouldn't take gems
I'd want to change places with science fiction fmz
Oh little fanmag so good, so true
Above all things I'd rather be you
I'd rather be you than underwear Longie
A Lensman story or Tucker's Pongie
I'd rather be you than a squirrel so frisky
A B-E-M or the ego of Miske
I'd rather be you than all things in existence
Than a chance to do covers with atomical assistance
I'd rather be you than a piece of cheese
Than sciencefiction's 4e or Ackermanese
I'd rather be you than the stars in the heavens
Ruja-blu's popovers or E.E. Evans
I'd rather be you than the dough in my pocket
Than a promag cover or a future rocket
I'd rather be you than a toy or a yo-yo
Or a form fitting dress surrounding Morojo
I'd rather be you than the Skylark of Space
Or the godawful contours of Korshak's face
I'd rather be you than a gentle breeze
Or even the dimples on Widner's knees
I'd rather be you than the Roks that hover
A vampire bold or Tigrina's lover
I'd rather be you than a frog that croaks
A nice little feud or a suicide hoax
I'd rather be you than a bowl of hash
An exclusion act or a fonepole crash
I'd rather be you than a new invention
Or the liquor consumed at a fan's convention
I'd rather be you than a bale of het
Or Louis Russell Chauvenet
I'd rather be you than a bolt of muslin
Or vivacious little Trudy Kuslan
I'd rather be you than Elmer Blurpie
Or a cute little rascally Martian Twerpie
I'd rather be you than a worn out sock
Or a nice little yarn by Robert Bloch
I'd rather be you than a cookie or wafer
A Walt D. recording or Paul Freehafer
Than 2J, Unger or Rothman too.
Oh yes little fanmag I'd rather be you
To write this sage I must've been nuts
And Tuck if you print this, you've sure got guts.

-by Walt Liebscher

(It took nerve to print this, 'tis true
But I'd rather be nervy than a poet like you)

-editor

MUSIC DEPT: I dream of Venus Nell with the light brown scales.