

(an occasional  
miscellany for  
fantasy fans.)

published irregularly

'at the sign of the black cat',27 woodland road,thornton heath,surey.

# THE ALEMbic

ne more British fanzine now sees the light of day! Whether it will live longer than the proverbial may-fly is problematical, but suggestions for future issues will be cheerfully received.

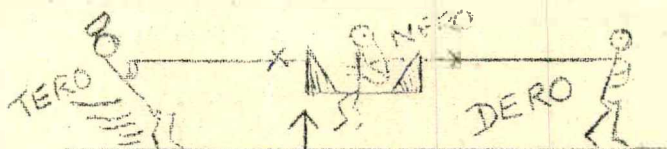
2. This fanzine owes its existence to the splendid example of Operation Fantast and if it can bask in a little of O.F.'s reflected glory, your editor will be happy (Thanks, Ken, for O.F.)

3. In O.F.2, Ken poses the question of the meaning of life (vide his article 'Why?') Most folk are at one time or another troubled by this question; we certainly don't exist for the sole purpose of getting a complete collection of SF (practically an impossibility anyway!) The only comment I can make is that those folk who are truly religious seem to avoid this feeling; they are so sure of the meaning of life and why they exist! But this is not a Society for the discussion of theological problems, so we'll leave it at that, apart from saying that the most popular SF usually deals with the triumph of good over evil (witness the ever popular Doctor--you know--E E Smith) Even in the weird type of fiction, this element often exists.

4. Interlude....

Did Shaver's Dero  
Activate Nero?

Couldn't the Tere  
Score more than Zero?



5. Some little while ago, we had 'flying saucers' in the sky; now at the time of writing (Jan.) the Americans report 'flying cones' (beakers, to you!) I expect they'll soon be seeing the rest of our eating utensils--knives, forks and spoons!

6. An Alembic is the Alchemist's distillation apparatus; I intend 'The Alembic' to help clear my views (and yours also)--in the same way as liquids are purified by distillation. (That's why this first issue is rather a mixup) In OF2, C Duncombe says that he 'seems to be suffering from a surfeit of SF and Fantasy. I can quite understand him. When I first discovered the BFL, I went whole-heartedly back to my pre-war madness over SF, but after a year I find myself reading mags not for the individual story, but in the hope that I can find one well worth reading--not only as a piece of fiction but for its 'message'. Altho' ASF carries the more 'scientific' tales, its yarns do not stick in my mind for any specific reason (other than that of entertainment) I have found that Amazing has all types of fiction (as well as thought-provoking articles)--Rog Phillips' "So shall ye reap" being an outstanding example of its 'message' yarns. If you want entertainment pure and simple, what beats the 'Green Man' series? (Little SF about them!) If I were restricted to one mag (Klone forbid!) my vote would go to Amazing (despite Shaver) I would be sorry to miss the others, ASF, FFM and the Fantasy Reader in particular, but I should be able to read everything from serious matter to light stuff in my chosen vehicle. As regards Shaver, well--I really don't know--does anyone? He's a good writer, and his stories hang together. In 'explaining' many Fortean mysteries, he has created a larger mystery of his own. I'm at a loss about it, but Shaver or no Shaver, I'll still read Amazing (Unless RAP changes its policy!)

7. For Lovers Of The Weird. (Macbeth IV.1)

Fillet of a fenny snake,  
In the cauldron boil and bake;  
Eye of newt, and toe of frog,  
Wool of bat, and tongue of dog,  
Adder's fork, and blind-worm's sting,  
Lizard's leg, and howlet's wing,  
For a charm of powerful trouble,  
Like a hell-broth, boil and bubble.

8. Finance. It is clear that the Library cannot expand as it might, with its present restricted revenue. 2/6d a year from 60-70 members will only bring in sufficient to buy a few of the good books now being published in America, when postage and duplicating costs have been



been paid, and it is also very small in view of the benefit we receive from the Library. When I first joined the Library, I was surprised at its scope. More money would, however, mean a better Library. I would suggest that to help the finances, a small charge be made for each item borrowed; from the details in the handbook, 1d per mag and 2d per book would be in about 10/- a month--a useful fillip to the funds. What do other members think about this? As magazines cost up to 3/6d for wartime issues, and much more for scarcer issues of earlier date, 1d apiece is little in comparison. A better bargain still would be 2d per book borrowed. UGH! that's enough on a distasteful subject!

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9) FACT - OR FICTION?

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The cloud chamber expanded.....

A sudden movement occurred in the Universe, where the stars had been pursuing their normal orderly courses. Something had happened--something unknown--a runaway star had appeared to upset the ordered action of the universe's inhabitants. It was more than a runaway star--it was a veritable juggernaut, taking no care for others in its path--crashing onward, ever onward.....

A small star was in its path, and the rogue star, a giant in comparison, passed within a few million miles of it. As it passed by unheeding, its tremendous gravitational force drew out a filament of the gaseous matter of which the small star was composed, giving this filament a circulatory motion. The aggressor vanished in the distance but the life of the small star was changed for ever. From being just one of countless numbers of similar stars, and a very minor one at that, it became one of the nobility of its race, having something that the others hadn't got---of which more anon.....

The filament of gaseous matter that had been drawn out revolved round the sun, and in eons of time, a change was to be seen. As the filament circulated it gradually cooled; as it cooled, the gaseous matter condensed; as the gaseous matter condensed, it was drawn together by its own force of gravitation; as the condensed matter drew together, planets were born.....

The star had now entered the nobility of its race, for relatively few had the luck to possess a family of planets.

Very soon, it became apparent that in all ten planets had been formed, and as they circulated around their parent sun, their motion was slowed by friction with the cloud of dust that was all that remained of the gaseous filament from which they had been born. In the process of slowing down, the fifth planet's speed was reduced too much to enable it to keep its place in the family, and it started falling into the sun. Before it had got very far, however, it was torn apart by the gravitational forces of its parent and brethren, and a mass of asteroids or minor planets was formed between the fourth and sixth planets. As the remaining planets cooled, their surfaces gradually solidified.....

On the third planet, life appeared, first in the form of algae, a primitive form of being, then evolving into fish, reptiles, birds, mammals, and finally.....MAN.

At first he could hardly be distinguished from his simian ancestors, but as his protruding chin slowly receded, and his slanting forehead straightened, he grew to resemble man of today.

Herded in caves, he was only able to preserve his species from the attacks of the carnivorous beasts that peopled the world by the small amount of intelligence he possessed--just sufficient, no more.....

After the lapse of many more years, man from being an intelligent beast, settled down and became an agriculturist; and science developed--mainly in form of astronomy and season-prediction, which latter is essential in an agricultural community. Man was still frightened by nature and human sacrifices were made to appease the gods of nature; eclipses of the sun were one of his worst trials, sacrifices to that body being prevalent and considered very important.

As science developed, man came to realise that there were many



It's all a bit of fun and for the good of the cause.

Section A; Who wrote (1)War of the Worlds(2)Unthinkable(3)The Poison Belt(4)The Country of the Blind(5)John Silence(6)The Scarlet Plague(7)Tracer of Lost Persons(8)Heart of the World(9)Seeker to the Dead(10)Nordenholt's Million(11)Dreams from the Past(12)The Wizard(13>Last and First Men(14)Club of Queer Trades(15)Marzio's Crucifix(16)In the Midst of Life(17)Ultimatum(18)Dawn(19)Dracula (20)Green Eyes of Bast(21)Purple Sapphire(22)Riddle of the Sands (23)Day of the Brown Horde(24)The Willows(25)The Hopkins Mss(26)A Traveller in Time(27)People of the Ruins(28)Rebirth(29)Maza of the Moon(30)Spacehounds of IPC(31)Liners of Time(32)Slayer of Souls(33)Weigher of Souls(34)Juggler and the Soul(35)Maracet Deep(36)Phra the Phoenician(37)The Brass Bottle(38)The Second Deluge(39)Terror from Timorkal(40)The Man Who Tilted the Earth

Section B; Who wrote the following stories that have appeared in magazines?-(41)The Gostak and the Doshes(42)Home of the Gods (43)After World's End(44)Truth about Pycraft(45)The Worlds of If(46)The Merwitch of Ether 18(47)The Green Man(48)City(49) Beyond the End of Space(50)Microcosmic God(51)The Serpent Goddess(52)The Equaliser(53)Interplanetary Bridges.

Section C; Who wrote magazine stories about (54)Venus Equilateral(55)The Lemurian Documents(56)'Foundation'(57)Don Channing(58)John Hale(59)Lancelot Biggs(60)Carson of Venus (61)Juggernaut Jones(62)Horsensense Hank(63)Adam Link(64) Kinnison(65)John Carter(66)Professor Jameson(67)Craig Kennedy

Section D. What is 'or' was the name of the SF mag which has had the longest life(68);and (69)the fantasy mag similarly. (70)Was an Amazing Quarterly issued in 1927,(71)1932,(73)1938? (74)Name as many British SF and Fantasy mags, and American reprints in England as you can--they needn't be still in existence.(1 mark for each mag named)

The answer to each question will count one mark,with the exception of question 74--see above.

The closing date for entries is the 31st May 1948--Come on,'Have a Go,Joe'(or whatever your name is!)

12.Well,that's the end of this issue of 'The Alembic'.I trust it has intsted you. No promises have been made about any future issues, but I'll probably have a go at another! I do trust,though, that this rather poor effort will encourage other British fans to air their views through their own fanzine. There's surely plenty of brains in the BEL,apart from those of the Big Three! Good hunting!

APPENDIX. I haven't left a lot of space for listing the books I have for sale,but here is a sample.If you'd like a full list of my surplus, send me a stamped addressed envelope,and you'll get the works!

{ E.R.Burroughs:-Return of Tarzan(Methuen)G.1/3d;Beasts of Tarzan(same) G.1/3d;Warlord Of Mars(same)G.1/3d;Tarzan of the Apes(TauchnitzPB) FG.1/-;Princess of Mars(Methuen)G.1/3d.

{ F Marion Crawford:-Zoroaster(Nelson)G.1/3d;Marzio's Crucifix(MacMillan) Man Overboard(same) G.1/3d each.

Unthinkable(Methuen)G 2/6d.

Modern Tales of Horror(edited by D.Hammett)(Gollancz)VG (448pps) 8/-

Switch On The Light(Collected by C C Thomson)(Selwyn & Blount)G 4/-

Dream(S Fowler Wright)(Harrap)G.1/6d.Power(S.Fowler Wright)(BayTree)1/3d Queer Stories from 'Truth'-FG-1/3d.

Before Adam (Jack London)(Collins)G 1/6d.White Fang(Nelson)F.1/-

Camberwell Miracle(J D Beresford)(Heinemann)FG.2/6d.

Hocus Root by C B Foster(published in Australia--PB)G 1/6d.

The Lost World(Conan Doyle)(Hodder and Stoughton)F 1/6d

The Poison Belt(same)EL/6d.

Riddle Of The Sands(E Childers)(Nelson) FG 1/6d.

Uncanny Tales (F Marien Crawford)(Unwin Fisher)F 1/6d.

..... NOTE;-Postage extra on orders under 10/-

NON-Fiction-

Worlds Without End(H Spencer Jones)(English Universities Press)VG 2/6d.

Microbe Hunters(Paul de Kruif)(POCKETbooks,N.Y.)G 1/3d(PB)

Miracles Of Military Medicine(A Q Maisel)(USA ARMED FORCES Ed.)G 1/3d.

Magic and Religion(J G Fraser)(Thinker's Library) 1/3d G-DJ

Easy Outline of Astronomy(M Davidson)(Thinker's) 1/3d G-DJ

The Occult Review:-Jan'47 and Summer '47 @ 9d each. (PB-

New Hope For Britain(Olaf Stapledon)(Methuen) 2/- G-DJ. Paper

Electronic Engineering(OCT NOV & DEC '46)G at 1/3d each. Bound)

Key:-F-Fair.FG-Fairly Good. G-Good. VG-Very Good. DJ-with dust jacket.

This ends number one of volume one of 'The Alembic'. 'be secin' you!