

DAGON

#699 APA-Q #611

July 2018

THE MINISTRY OF MISCELLANY

This is **Dagon**, a monthly fanzine of commentary on science, science fiction, fantasy, mystery novels, comic art, role-playing games (RPGs), and anything else that seems like a good idea at the moment, is published by John Boardman, Room 108, 2250 S. Semoran Blvd, Orlando FL 32822. My land line number is (407) 270-5613. The number of my new cell-phone, like that of its predecessor, is (718) 736-4901. **Dagon** circulates through APA-Q, an amateur press association (APA) edited once a month (if enough contributions come in) by Mark L. Blackman, Apt. 4A, 1745 E. 18th Street, Brooklyn, NY 111229. His telephone number is (718) 336-3255, and his internet address is <narklblackman@juno.com>.

O At
P Great
E Intervals
R This
A Appears
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O Optic
N Nerves

The copy count for APA-Q is 15 print copies.

Dagon also goes to others who have indicated an interest in its subject matter. Subscriptions are 10 issues for \$10 in the United States, and for \$25 elsewhere. I also trade with other amateur publications.

#2234

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Here at Excellence it was announced that on Sunday 3 June there would be a movie and popcorn in the auditorium at 2 PM. The title of the movie was not announced, but, mainly interested in the popcorn, I attended at the specified time. It quickly developed that the film would be nothing less than *Gone with the Wind*, which I had never seen despite all the acclaim it had won.

So I settled in to watch it, in one of the smallest audiences that had probably ever seen it. The audience varied between five and eight individuals and there wasn't any popcorn. Its running time, I later learned, was 3 hours and 42 minutes. I had heard of this film, of course, but thought of it chiefly as an exercise in Confederate nostalgia. I still retain this judgment, although several others were added as I viewed it. Its principal stars are Vivien Leigh as Scarlett O'Hara, Clark Gable as Rhett Butler, and Leslie Norman as Ashley Wilkes. And Hattie McDaniel unquestionably deserved the controversial Oscar she earned as Mammy for "Best Supporting Actress".

During the scenes in which Atlanta was besieged, captured, and burned, I recalled that, in the actual events portrayed, my great-great-grandfather's brother had participated. Sergeant James Boardman of the First Minnesota Light Artillery had been one of the "fifty thousand strong" whose deeds are celebrated in the song "Marching through Georgia", and I broke into the song's chorus as one of the film's actors, portraying a looter of the O'Haras' mansion, sang it on the screen.

One of the film's defects was the large number of minor characters who were not introduced in a way that made their roles clear. At one point, Scarlett was called "Mrs. Kennedy" although her then-husband was not introduced adequately enough to account for this second marriage or her

second widow-hood. And, towards the end of the film, we got a poignant deathbed scene of a woman called "Nelly", whose presence and role in the film was never adequately explained.

The initial scenes, in which the slave-owning southern aristocracy eagerly anticipates a quick and easy victory over the "Yankees", shows Rhett Butler disagreeing with this consensus with arguments which we know from the history of the conflict were grievously accurate. He points out that the Rebels were outnumbered in manpower, industrial capability, and naval strength. He plans to set up in business as a runner of the northern blockade, to his own personal profit but for strictly selfish reasons rather than for giving any effective help to the rebellion. From time to time during the film we see him describing his successes. But we also see the results of a Rebel attempt to invade the northern states and destroy their military ability, when a report comes back of the Rebel failure at Gettysburg. This report is quickly followed by extremely long Confederate casualty lists. This ties in with the general popular belief that their defeat at Gettysburg was what broke the Confederate war effort. This belief was probably due to the fact that Gettysburg was near to Washington, and to the influential northern newspapers. Actually the Rebel defeat was chiefly due to the early seizure of New Orleans, the federal naval blockade, the fall of the vital fortress at Vicksburg, and the one event given the greatest emphasis in the film, the famous March Through Georgia.

By a curious coincidence, I saw *Gone with the Wind* again, on the following evening, on the channel of Turner Classic Movies. It was presented as part of a series of Leslie Norman films. My doubts about the film from its previous showing were not resolved, however. But I saw again its famous final scene, in which Rhett Butler walks out on Scarlett in what appeared to me to be a long overdue departure from her life. In this scene she plaintively asks what she will do without him, He replies with what was then a controversial line: "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn." The word "damn" meant at that time that it had to be carefully explained and justified before its inclusion was allowed. It was, of course, parodized, as much in this often parodized film was. In *Mad* magazine's parody "Gone with the Widow", Scarlett's plea "At least sign over the rights to the hydroelectric dam to me so I can water the peanut crop!" was met with the reply, "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a hydroelectric dam!"

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In reading over **Dagon** #698, I was dismayed to see an unusually large number of misprints. This was certainly due to my large number of mistakes in hurrying to get that issue printed in time to be included in **APA-Q** #610 in 2 June. I hope I have enough time to get this issue in better order.

These difficulties were mainly due to the condition of the keys on my computer. The letters on the "I", "L", and "O" keys have been rubbed off by repeated use, and are impossible to see. This is responsible for many of the misprints.

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I have lately been reading a book which attempts to bring a third author into the fictional life of the scapegrace character Flashman. The first was the popular 19th-century author Thomas

Hughes, who wrote *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, the tale of a boy in one of England's famous "public" (but actually private and very pricey) schools for boys of the upper classes. In these books Tom Brown is contrasted with a disobedient and dissipated fellow student named Flashman, Eventually Flashman is expelled, and his career thereafter is taken up by the 20th century Scottish author George MacDonald Fraser. Family connections got Harry Paget Flashman a commission in the army, and he was involved in several British campaigns, including the Crimean War and the Indian "Mutiny". which is today regarded in India as an Indian war for independence. Fraser's Flashman books display Flashman as a pure-blooded military coward, with a gift for making his acts look to his superiors as acts of heroism, and in this guise he achieves the rank of colonel. a knighthood, and a Victoria Cross.

Fraser wrote twelve novels about Flashman's military career, with these titles in chronological order:

Flashman

Royal Flash

Flash for Freedom

Flashman at the Charge

Flashman in the Great Game

Flashman's Lady

Flashman and the Redskins

Flashman and the Dragon

Flashman and the Mountain of Light

Flashman and the Angel of the Lord

Flashman and the Tiger

Flashman on the March

At this point in his career of picaresque novels, unfortunately, Fraser died. But another British author, Barry Tighe, took up this series, which by now had advanced to 1860, with Flashman in China about to take ship for another adventure. With that critical date in mind, Tighe's next book practically was forced to take such a title as *Flashman and the War between the States*. But several literary and legal complications intervened. A book with this title was indeed published, but somebody intervened at law, and *Flashman and the War between the States* disappeared from bookstores and libraries, and is now a great rarity. Nothing daunted, Tighe rewrote the book, renamed its hero (if that is the word I want), and re-published it with the cumbersome title *Sir Thomas "British Tommy" Armstrong and the War between the States*. I don't know whether the legal objections were entered by Fraser's family or by his publisher.

When I lived at my daughter Deirdre's place in Maryland, she got for me a copy of Tighe's book, and I am reading it now. When I have finished it, I will review it in **Dagon**. At present, my principal objection to it is its title. "The War between the States" is a gross misnomer for the conflict of 1861-1865, and it seems to be used only by people who would apparently like a second round of the rebellion. It was not a war between some states and other states. It was a rebellion by slaveholding aristocrats who took control of a mere eleven states, and the government of the entire United States of America. The official government history of the conflict is entitled "The War of the Rebellion". At this late date some people may want to ask, "Who rebelled, and why?" This is why I

prefer the descriptive term “Slaveholders’ Rebellion”. The common term “Civil War” can only draw objections from people who say that it really wasn’t very civil.

And it was certainly a treasonous rebellion. At the time the United States Constitution was written, the European monarchies called anything that the king didn’t like, “treason”. So the term was rigorously defined in our Constitution: “Treason against the United States shall consist only in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort.” This exactly describes the actions of the Rebels of 1861-1865. In fact, once these Rebels had surrendered, the government proceeded to draw up an indictment against the Rebel leader, Jefferson Davis, presumably to be followed by legal proceedings against his subordinates. However, this plan was then dropped, presumably because the country was relieved that the long and bloody conflict was over at last and very unlikely to be continued. Otherwise, Davis and Lee would have certainly faced the nooses which their conduct had deserved.

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By the time most readers of **Dagon** receive this issue, the 2018 World Cup will have concluded with the naming of a champion. In most of the world it will not be necessary to name the sport for which the succession of games will have established a world champion. But it is the game which originated in Great Britain and is there, and almost everywhere else, called “football”. However, the British slang term “soccer” must be used in the United States, because “American football” is actually a gross evolution from rugby, chiefly noted for producing concussions in its players.

The World Cup competition is held every four years, and even the United States competes, although this year its team did not qualify for a place among the 32 national teams that compete for the World Cup. This year’s World Cup was held in Russia, which will profit greatly from admissions to the games,

It has just been announced that the location of the 2026 World Cup will be in North America, owing to a successful joint bid, the first in soccer’s history, by the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The total field will then increase from 32 to 48 national teams, and of the 80 games, 60 will be played in the United States and 10 each in Canada and Mexico. The final will be played in MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, NJ.

As the only truly international team sport, soccer often has national antagonisms attached to its play. This was illustrated vividly in 1946, the year after the end of World War II, in a game played in Germany by a team of British officers and a team of German prisoners of war who had not yet been repatriated. The German team won the game, and as the players were leaving the field, one of the Germans said, “Hah! We beat you at your national sport!” One of the British players replied, “Last year we beat you at yours!”

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In Florida the primary elections fall this year on Tuesday 28 August, which is late by com-

(continued in page 8)

GETTING CAUGHT UP

Most of this month's column will deal with topics discussed in the May and June issues of **APA-Q**. My comments on recent issues of **CAR-PGa Newsletter** will be deferred until the August issue of **Dagon**.

Blancmange #529 (Blackman): To continue my comments from the last **Dagon**, my parents moved frequently when I was in elementary school, so I attended quite a few of them. The total comes to eight schools in four states, and sixth grade was the first grade that I went through all in the same school, in Los Angeles, and I left it after that one year. By this time my parents had settled, somewhat more permanently, in a suburb of Los Angeles where we lived for six years until I left for college and my family returned to the Midwest. So I frequently had to adjust to a new school with new conditions, surroundings, and classmates.

I think that Ed Meškys's parents might not have been regarded as "illegal immigrants" because their settling here deprived a World War I combatant of a seaman, and that was a small but significant contribution to reducing the number of belligerents. Of course, the eventual American entry into that war served the opposite purpose, but by then Wilson's vehemently pro-war stance dominated the nation's intentions.

I was surprised to find a town called "Davenport" in Florida, not far from Orlando. One of the towns in which I spent my childhood (in three different schools) was the much larger Mississippi River port of Davenport, Iowa. I plan to get in touch with Ed and Sandy, now that we are so close together, unless of course they are off to spend the summer in New Hampshire.

Florida seems to be filled with towns with unusual names. There are Kissimmee, Ocoee, Apopka, and Holopaw, but none can match a seaside town southeast of here, called Yeehaw Junction. (I am giving my word that I have not made up this name.) There is also a town called Bushnell, which I assume is not named after my cousin Simeon Bushnell, who in the 1850s was a "conductor" on the "Underground Railroad" when that name did not refer to a subway system. After serving a three-month jail sentence for his anti-slavery work, he concluded that non-violence would not settle the problem of slavery, and enlisted with a tall New Englander whose name and beard were both "Brown". Bushnell was ill and so did not accompany Brown and his "nineteen men so true" described in the song "John Brown's Body", and two years later he died of tuberculosis.

Another nearby town is named "Leesburg". There is another in northern Virginia, not far from where I used to live in Maryland. But the one in Virginia might possibly have been named after the treasonous general's father or uncle, both of whom were among the founding fathers of the country that their son and nephew tried to tear apart. But the United States did not acquire Florida until long after those days, so there is no doubt as to whom the town is named after.

And a quick news report of a traffic accident claimed that there is in Orlando a "Boardman Street". Though the Boardmans originally landed in Massachusetts, some did later move south, but I have no idea whom that street may have been named after.

Like Ed and Sandy, I also have information on a science-fiction club in Orlando, though I have not yet been able to attend any of the meetings. It meets on the second Sunday of each month from 2:30 to 3:30 PM, but I have not yet learned where.

How to... #123 (Del Grande): Thanks for the nine-digit ZIP codes, even though I am now persuaded that they do not seem to be necessary for mail delivery. But they may become necessary, so I am going to use the ones provided by Don. They will be in the next edition of the **Dagon** Directory, probably in the January 2019 issue of **Dagon**.

There are indeed a great many people who are unfamiliar with the Simpsons, as well as with *Coraline*, of which I had never heard before you mentioned it. This is a minor nuisance when I encounter a crossword puzzle which refers to the Simpsons in its clues.

Thanks for the explanation of “the Republican Revolution of 1994”. The 1994 events you cite were a “revolution” only if the tRumpification of that party is called a “catastrophe”, which may well be the judgment of history. I would speculate that the cause of that “revolution” could easily be the election of an African-American to the presidency. Apparently we liberals have under-estimated the effects of the election of Obama among Trump voters, or as I have characterized them elsewhere “hillbillies.”

The nautical term “under weigh” seems to be the origin from which the term “under way” developed, among people who were unaware that when a ship sets out on a voyage it “weighs anchor”.

APA-Qover #610 (Blackman): A television set in the Excellence dining hall was tuned to a program - I don't know which program - that proclaimed that Superman had turned in his cape for a police badge.

Blancmange #530 (Blackman): Alan Magill's book *The Spy Who Forgot Whose Side He Is On* sounds like a book well worth reading. Now that Karina has returned to Orlando, I can borrow a ride from her, visit a local library, get a card, and look for this and several other books I've been meaning to read when I have access to a library again.

A few years ago, Israel bombed - with “conventional” bombs - an Iraqi weapons factory. If the Iranian nuclear facility also endangers Israel, it could also be destroyed by an Israeli air raid. Israel, a nuclear power, is quite capable of taking care of itself, and America need not be involved.

There are a few too many run-on sentences under the heading of “Recent Reading”, and so many of your conclusions are a bit difficult to follow.

Dagon #698 (me): I have recently discovered that I printed an earlier version of *The Thong oif Thor* a few years ago in **Dagon**. Like the better version in **Dagon** #698, it is adapted from a joke in prose. In that joke, the punch line was “*You're thore! You thon-of-a-bitch, I'm tho thore I can hardly pith!*”

I have heard nothing from or about my nephew Dana, and how far his home and office are from the site of Mt. Kilauea on the “Big Island” of Hawaii. But there have been no reports of deaths from the succession of eruptions and fissures which have developed at the site of the volcano since

the eruptions began at the beginning of May. Several hundred homes have been destroyed, and the Hawaiian government does not seem yet to have made an estimate of the cost of the damage. This makes a contrast with the situation during the more recent volcanic eruption in Guatemala. But it is obvious that the United States is much better governed than a Central American dictatorship.

After the *Star Wars* party celebrating the 4th of May (as in “May the 4th be with you”) I noticed that among the distributed items I had collected at the party was a paper mask displaying the face of Chewbacca the Wookiee, whom I once parodized as “Snortcoke the Wooliee”, companion in arms of “Juan Alón” pilot of the spaceship “Instant Turkey”.) Other parties got masks depicting Han Solo, Imperial Stormtroopers, or other characters human and otherwise.

Added to my sports viewing on television have been the soccer games of the World Cup. The teams did not include a United States representation, since the U. S. team did not qualify for a place among the 32 contestants. So far the biggest surprise in the play-offs has been the defeat of the heavily favored Argentine team, which made it to the final in 2014 but was there defeated by the German team. This time they were defeated in the first round by Croatia, one of the segments of the partitioning of Yugoslavia. Worse, the score was 3-0, which in soccer is like, say, 40-0 in football. This followed an equally surprising Argentine tie by Iceland, 1-1. A nation with less than a third of a million people tied one of the perennial powers among national soccer teams!

With major league baseball and international soccer dominating televised sports, I have not pursued further inspection of softball. This is mainly because all televised softball games feature female college teams, and with the academic year closing, these players go on to other activities. So some of my speculations about the sport have remained speculations. While the distances from home plate to the outfield fences are definitely smaller for softball than for baseball, I do not know whether the dimensions of the diamonds are also smaller. In baseball, each side of the diamond is 90 feet (27.4 meters), and the distance from the pitcher’s mound to home plate is 60½ feet (18.4 meters). For all I know, these distances may be smaller for a softball diamond, to accommodate the lesser speeds of which most female athletes are capable. Also, there is no pitcher’s mound in softball. The location in the middle of the diamond, where the pitcher works, is raised by a few inches from the level of the infield in baseball, but not in softball. And there is no grass at all in the softball infield; this is apparently a requirement, though I cannot see why.

Karina and most of her family returned to Orlando, having changed their itinerary en route. Alaska was very enjoyable and picturesque, but their California plans changed. Karina’s daughter and son had settled in Hollywood earlier, and had sought work in films. Don’t think of them as movie actors, however; they had important “behind the scenes” jobs in arranging settings, props, and the other necessities for a good film. Diana had joined her parents in Orlando several months ago, but Deanie stayed there. He had planned to come back to Orlando with the rest of the family, but during their trip he decided to stay on longer in hope of interesting and profitable work, so he remains in Hollywood, and his parents and sister arrived in Orlando on 19 June.

THE MINISTRY OF MISCELLANY (continued from page 4)

parison with other states. I plan to vote in the Democratic primary for Philip Levine for Governor, for reasons which I'll discuss in the August **Dagon**, in case a few readers vote in Florida.

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I want to thank my daughters, Karina Wright and Deirdre Perez, for duplicating, collating, and stapling, the (usually) monthly issues of **Dagon**, and for getting me the stamps necessary for mailing them out. They have also, when necessary, helped me in finding out what seems to be necessary in getting the computer to do what I want it to do, since both of them are more familiar with the workings of this computer than I am. I also want to thank Mark Blackman for including **Dagon** in **APA-Q** almost every month, and for occasionally delaying its collation date a few days when I am a little late in getting the copies of **Dagon** to him. That, fortunately, does not need to be done with this issue, since I have been able to get this issue to him on time, partly because it is only eight pages long this month.

Dagon #699 (APA-Q #611)

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you may find something of
interest to you on page ____.