

# truce

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— o —  
Caveat  
Lector

Flounded 1953

Eat yer heart  
out. How  
baby!

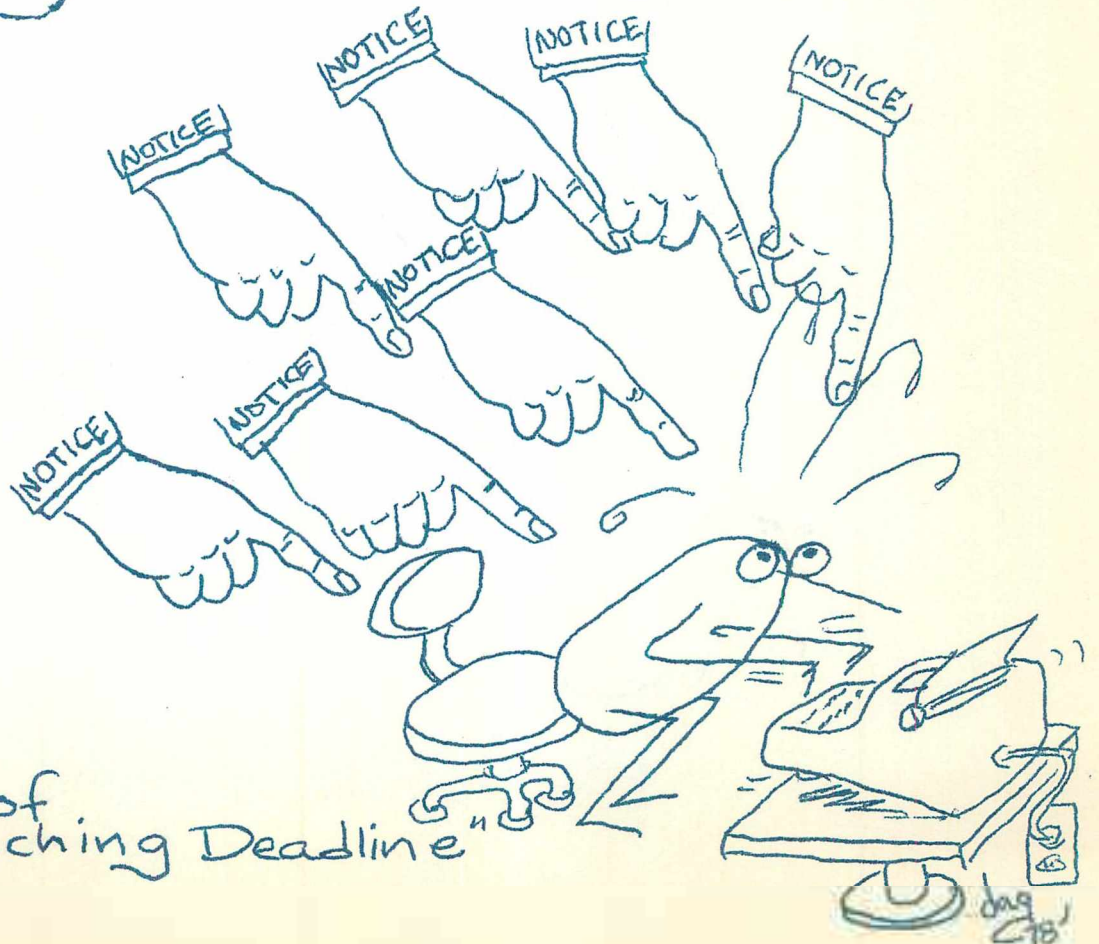


Complete in  
this issue:  
"The Oddest  
Odyssey"

by T. Ferguson,  
self-portray'd



Our  
Flounder



"Spectre of  
Approaching Deadline"

dag  
1978

(Ed. note: Like a long-vanished pulpzine hero called The Whisperer -- he was on radio, too as I dimly recall -- I see many strange things. Especially when I unlock my monogrammed postoffice box with practically an ocean view on almost any given morning. As but one of the more outstanding examples, I get occasional unlikely items from Badge #775 in a fairly goodsized police department in a city on the country's lower edge. The badge holder rejoices in the name of Thomas Grey Ferguson, Jr., RTP&BP. I am not at all certain if the readers of this painfully random publication are really prepared to hear what the honorific acronym stands for. Not without justification, Ferg harbors a certain sangfroidal askance for the perspicacity of his fellow fuzz and this attitude tends to bleed over into his writings which, had they been done by a Chinese hatchetman with a passion for dressing in the latest Parisian fashions, might be termed tong-in-chic. The exhibit you are about to encounter is reasonably typical of the genre. I do not feel overly abashed in tipping it into a group nominally sharing a common interest in science fiction or at least, fantasy. One of the cherished concepts of that group is to spin up a what-if framework. What-if the Southrons had won the War To Establish The Confederacy; What If Japanese Merchandise Came With Batteries Included; that sort of speculative exploring. In the story that is faunching to unfold, our gifted albeit delightfully daft craughtsman is going to speculate on how it might have read had Homer's doughty characters been selected at random from the police department for which he, Ferg, packs a badge. I think it makes an amusing romp. You are free to agree or disagree, as you wish. Grue, however, is my magazine and, provided the first eight pages between any given Augusts are not reprints, anything goes. So here goes Ferg, whether you're ready or not.)

## ODYSSEUS & THE GOLDEN FLEECE

Excerpted from 'Ferguson's "Mythology & History for Policemen"'

By T. G. Ferguson, Jr., RTP&BP

Odysseus was an old Greek or, rather, kind of a young Greek at the time of this story, who lived in the old days. Some called him Ulysses, but his friends called him Odie. He differed from most Greeks in many respects. For one thing, he was pretty stout and had brains, though it was hard to tell sometimes. He was chief of police for Greece, pretty high up. One other thing was he preferred women. He had one. Her name was Penelope.

One day he mentioned to her, "We been getting a lot of flack and obscene clay tablets from the folks over in Troy. They got Helen too, a good-looking broad. I'm gonna take some of the boys and row over there and teach them not to mess with me."

Penelope sighed. "How long will you be gone?"

Odie says, "About ten years, I'd guess. Don't worry -- I'm pretty tight with Zeus and Athena and all that bunch. I'll be OK."

Penelope came back, "Well, you're sure gonna miss a lot while you're gone."

Odie says, "Well, why not? There ain't nothing to do around here most of the time, anyway."

Penelope rolled her eyes upward. She couldn't roll them heavenward because all this was B. C. and Heaven hadn't been invented yet.

Odie rounded up a bunch of his boys and they scrounged a boat and took off for Troy. The Trojans were pretty tough cookies but they gave in after ten years of fighting and went

in for other avenues of activity, as can be noted on inconspicuous drugstore shelves, down to the present day. Odie had pulled the old Wooden Horse scam on them and they gulped it whole. After all that, Odie's gang wanted to split for the home twenty because their nightsticks were just splinters and their uniforms were a sight.

Odie felt lukewarm about heading back. Penelope was forever giving him static about boozing it up and big-eyeing the broads. So he appointed his fastest sprinter as a volunteer to run a message back to Penelope. It read: "Babe, I'm gonna go by and glom the Golden Fleece on the way home. Helen's too old for you to worry about now. War's over. Love, Odie."

After some little while, back came a clay tablet in reply, saying, "I'll bet, you turkey. You been gone ten years and my suitors are eating us out of house and home. Get on back to Greece with the Fleece, you cottonpicker. Love & Good Stuff, Penelope."

Odie had a helluva time getting back. Some of his cops retired, some quit to sell insurance and a few died. Despite this, he sailed on. Even with the Gods looking after them, they had their share of trouble and then some. Once they went by an island full of sirens. These were not the kind of sirens you hit on a code 3 or whatever. What they were were some real foxy broads who would sing and sling sweettalk like you couldn't believe, so that all the boats would veer in and total out on the rocks. But Odie was too smart for them; well, nearly.

"Boys," he says, "tie my ass to this-here mast and then plug up your ears with wax. That way, we'll row right by 'em. Don't pay no attention to me if I was to order you to row onto the rocks." Well, this worked out pretty good, all in all, only a few of the crew were of an ethnic extraction easily confused and they ended up tying their ears to the mast and plugging Odie's ass with wax but at least they got past the sirens.

Another time, they dropped the hook and went ashore and a giant with only one eye ate a bunch of the boys like Twinkies and penned the rest of the bunch up in a cave. This set the troops to puppy-mothering like you couldn't hardly believe. "Screw this noise," they said, "we ain't messing around with no giant, even on overtime."

Odie brooded about it and came up with an idea. "We'll get him bombed and I'll put out his light." So he did just that: sharpened a nightstick and rammed it home in the giant's one and only eye. They weren't home free, even so, because the giant had sealed the door of the cave with a hellish big rock that only he could move, but they were penned up in there with his flock of sheep, which tended to provide a pretty garmy atmosphere but they made their getaway by roping themselves onto the underside of a sheep apiece so that the giant — whose name was Polyphemus — didn't spot them on his Braille check of the sheep.

As they piled aboard the boat and took off, Odie hollered back, "Don't forget it was me that done that to you, Polyphemus!" As it turned out, that wasn't such a bright move.

Seems Polyphemus's daddy was Poseidon AKA Neptune, head honcho for all the seas and oceans, millponds mudpuddies and the like. Polyphemus filed a heavy beef with his old man and he, in turn, gave them some weather you couldn't possibly believe. But they finally shook loose from under it.

And then there was the time they ended up on this island run by a mean broad name of Circe and, just for kicks, she turned them all into swine. Everybody was really ticked over



this particular status of the quo and they went around oinking at each other, "Hey, by golly, now we really ARE pigs!" Odie couldn't see any way out of this, so he got on the ham radio and put out an APB for Athena and she turned up as a small boy.

"Good grief," moans Odie, "that's all we really needed was a lousy kid!"

The goddess Athena came back with, "Look, you dumb klutz, I've had it clear to here with this forever having to bail you out all the time. I'll do it this one last time and after that you're on your own, fella. You and your men, eat some of these weeds and you'll go back to being men. Though it's hard enough to tell the difference, sometimes!"

So they ate the weeds and, sure enough, it changed them back to the way they were so they could hit the road for home again, but there was a lot of bitching about having been pigs for a while. For one of the gripes, some of them had changed back to being men but they still had the rings in their noses.

So they finally got through to where the Golden Fleece was and glommed onto it and boogied for home. By this time, they had been gone for twenty years and, while all this was going on, there was Penelope, with 108 boyfriends and a chastity belt that had blown a connecting rod in the back stretch.

Nobody believed Odie was who he claimed to be when he finally made it back. Penelope didn't want to buy his story because she'd made it with all her boyfriends, quite a few of them more than once.

One of the freeloaders piped up, "Crap, you ain't Odie. If you was, you could string this old bow he used to shoot and put an arrow through those five axe heads over there."

So Odie strung the bow and drilled the axe heads through and through and snarled, "Okay, all you lousy sunzabitches are UNDER ARREST!"

This torqued off the boyfrinds to such an extent they tried to kill Odie, but he grabbed some more arrows and made shish kebabs out of the whole bunch. They had it coming because they'd been living it up on his wife and pay for all those years. Odie ruled it to be self-defense and quashed the indictment.

So Odie wound up with the Golden Fleece, Penelope and 108 scalps and that's not at all bad for a 40 year-old Greek. But, for years after that, every now and then, Penelope would get a faraway look in her eyes and say, "Look, sugar, wouldn't you like to bug off and rescue a damsel in distress, or something?"

And Odie would just run his eyes along the scalp racks, smirking a little. After he hit retirement age, he wangled an appointment to commissioner and had it made for the rest of his tour of duty.

But it wasn't all beer and skittles for Odie.

Penelope saw to that.

--T. G. Ferguson, Jr.  
RTP&BP

MISCELLANEA

Grennell's  
Ramblings,  
Usually  
Extemporaneous

"There's no such thing as too toujours gai, you silly cockroach!"

So I was standing there in the checkout line at Albertson's, just a few minutes ago, nearly up to the register and lost amid the churning ferments of my inner thoughts. I don't recall what I was thinking about. Can you recall what you thought about the last time you sweated a supermart checkline? Gradually, it reached my conscious levels that someone was prodding my arm vigorously and whirling in my ear, the left, i.e., purely decorative one, if that. I hit the hold-button on the inner thoughts, came awake, swiveled my head to home in upon her larynx with my right ear and emitted a 'huh?'

"The Scotch and the catfood, does it goes well together?"

"Why indeed, yes'm. We puree it in the blender and serve it as a fondue. Gives the catfood an amusing smoky ambience.

A fine chatoyant glaze crept across her orbs, not quite the 'rich glint of lunacy' of Waugh's immortal phrasing. We had no further communion.

24-hour supermarts are groovy things, I continue to believe, even after an even dozen years here in the land of eternal springtime and occasional earthquakes. I continue to cherish the memory of the night long ago when I sashayed into the Mayfair market up in A-USA, bought one 50-lb sack of cat gravel and stalked majestically out with it, at a bit after 2 a.m. I like to think I may've left spectators in my wake who continue, right down to the present, speculating fruitlessly as to why someone wanted to buy a large bag of Kitty Litter at that time of day. It was simple, really: I had worked late at the office. Jean had mentioned we needed more c.g. and needed it badly, so I picked up some on the way home. By local law, the sale of precious essence halts at (I think) 2 a.m., resuming around 0600. Apart from that, anything goes and, as one who has spent a lifetime regarding timepieces as the ultimate tyrants, I dig it, real deep.

On divers other occasions, I've gone down the sidewalk, clutching purchases that levitated eyebrows of other passersby. Once, e.g., it was a pair of plumber's friends, another time, a single boxing glove. The boxing glove wasn't really a purchase. I had borrowed it from a friendly sporting goods store in Covina to use as a prop for a photo. We were doing a piece on firearms recoil and I slipped it over the butt of a rifle and it worked out fairly well. The plumber's friends were for photo props, too. I needed them for the spoof we did, long ago, on The Shadow, so I could be pictured ostensibly climbing up a brick wall, Cranston-fashion.

Bearing up under the lensman's load tends to get one funny looks, every now'n again. I got one from my neighbor lady across the street, just a few weeks ago. She was puzzled as to why anyone would be standing in the street, in the wan light just after dawn, carefully photographing the week's rubbish as it awaited the disposal truck. I took pity on her and explained that we were running a story on home security and it was very short on supporting art and I had canvassed the house for empty cartons in which items had arrived of a nature to whet a burglar's interest. I was creating a 'don't-do-this' photo. I think she believed me. I hope so. I'd hate to go down in neighborhood annals as that nut who does art studies of his garbage.

I had hoped to grow a Bleen for you this go-'round, but it doesn't seem to be germinating very successfully. For the benefit of newer readers, I should note that Bleen

"A hoss-thief should be hung,  
but not too heavy!"

--Bat Dursten

The behind of a lady named Hannah  
Is designed in a singular manner.

You can view this delight  
Just about any night:

It's for rent on the streets of Savannah.

--Eidrin Fxot

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was the title that used to be reserved for concatenations of mailing comments. Then we had titles such's Qabal and Binx, but I'm not quite certain why in this distant remove. The only thing modern medical science knows about the matter for sure is that it is very mysterious.

Quite apart and beyond the bailiwick of mailing comments per se and pur sang, I feel a mild lech to respond to at least a few of Harry Warner Jr.'s wheeblings, pulings, caterwaulings, barfings, strainings, spulings and allied gallimaufry about what I tend to regard as a typhoon in a pisspot.

Crap, Warner. I'm not trying to sell you on CB radio... I'm not trying to sell anybody on CB. There are a lot of bloody nerds in CB, just precisely/exactly as there are a lot of nerds in amateur journalism (uhh-you'd noticed?). Face it, bady, there are a lot of nerds in any branch of human activity.

If you're just wheebling and sputtling up a whapply because of getting interference on your hi-fi gear, chances are quite likely it's due to the fact that your hi-fi stuff has been around since Millard Fillmore and it has a dreadfully low signal rejection rating. I don't know bo-diddley about electronics and all that bumf, but I get the word this's a distinct possibility. You just might look into it.

CB is not all things for all people, for-sure. Off and on, we like to tune in, right here in Missing Banjo. Almost anywhere else, forget it! Go 8 miles down the superslab and it gets to be a zoo you couldn't believe around San Wahn Cuppadrano. I tuned in back in the Milwaukee area and sheeg, forget that, too! It seemed to consist mostly of strident senegambians telling what they wuz agonna do to any hapless honkeys whut din't git off'n their two-way, mahhn!

And, too, I recall the redneck trucker, up Oregon way last May who voiced a fervent yearning to vivisect me, truck to keelson, merely because he was bored with hearing me give the mile-marker location where the Oregon fuzzums were arranging electronics surprises for northbounders. What upset him was that I took advantage of the mobile 2-ways ostensible anonymity to suggest that he... well, never mind. For all we know, J. Everett Osbourne may be listening.

Fact remains, Harrypoo, I've been stifling any mild inclinations to scuffle on your doorstep since '53ishly or so. Not that you've not ticked me a ;time or two along the way but I've kept the gloves on: no bless a bluejay and all that. You wanna take off the gloves? Are you really certain, Mr. Warner, sir, you know what you're prosposing? Sheeg, kismet to the 7th power, maybe the 8th.

Well, if it works out reasonably well, the next page will lay in here in reasonable comfort and tha's wot I wuz hoping to bring off with all this. On-stencil composing is and remaineth a way of life. Takes a ;bit of doing, but infinitiely better'n first-drafting onto paper, for tha's the prole way to do it. We have one more page coming up, already cut, which (it's to be hoped) will make reasonable sense in tontext. At least, it's not a reprint and a FAPA without Ted White is like a chccolate malt without garlic!



I don't give a damn  
For mutton or lamn.

--Eldrin Fzot

Olive witch brings up a minorly galling facet in the status of the quo, namely the social acceptability of various hobbies and focused interests. I have followed many paths over the years and hardly a one that failed to get at least someone royally ticked. For as long as I can remember, I've had some manner of fascination for firearms and we needn't point up the wrath that that arouses in myriad quarters. I enjoy riding motorcycles and lots of people hate motorcycles with, I suspect the same mindless hubris I feel toward kids on skateboards. I used to be an amateur photographer and belonged to cameraclubs and like that. Harmless pursuit? Well, hardly. The city council of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin -- where I used to live in those days -- quaked in their executive chairs for fear that someone with the capability of processing their own stuff might use it for purposes of propagating pornography. Sheeg, I didn't even have a pornograph to play it on. For a brief space, we dabbled at coin collecting and learned, all aghast, that coin collectors were the diabolical dastards responsible for the coin shortage that was plaguing the nation's economy. Sheeg, one can't win.

Some people (are you still reading along, Harry?) some people, as I was saying, would kick, even if they were to be hanged with a brand-new rope. That, in these embittered latter years, has come to be one of the benchmarks of my personal credo, along with the dour reflection that no one ever said it was supposed to be simple.

Of late, much of my attention has been centered around the home fabrication of furniture; the do-it-yourself, home workshop schtick, in a word or two. A healthful, wholesome, inoffensive pursuit, one might assume at first casual glance. Well, don't be too sure. Space being limited, I lug a portable workbench out onto my front drive on weekends and I'm probably violating the spirit of local ordinance that decrees that no noxious pursuits can be pursued in view of 'my fellow homeowners in the tract.'

My fellow homeowners in the tract got the local gauleiters to lay a bitchletter upon me last summer because my grass had gotten too prosperous. Even the hobby of not mowing one's lawn can get you in dutch.

As to the hobby at hand, the letting of words onto paper by means of privately owned press surrogates, that can get you hairy rumbles, as I learned in 1958. The postal services prob'ly still have records of the return addresses of people who sent me postcards in late '57 and Christmas cards and the like.

It seems a Baltimoron -- or whatever you call someone who lives in Baltimore -- had taken offense at something I'd written and, by way of condign retaliation, had sent off a roaring denunciation of my affairs to the PM General in Wash-DC (by airmil, yet). The USPO put what they call a hood on my incoming mail, keeping records of everyone who wrote to me. Finally, when they dispaired of building an airtight case for automatic conviction, the local inspector called me in and explained the situation.

"We're really puzzled about one thing, though," he confided. "You had this one letter from someone who put down 'CARSCIFSOC' as their name. What's a CARSCIFSOC'?"

"I believe it stands for Carolina Science Fiction Society," I explained. He seemed much relieved to hear that.

Well, I've gotten into trouble from very nearly everything I've ever done and if I wind up getting glotsch and flak over the misdeedd of CB operators in Hagerstown, Maryland, it doesn't surprise me hardly at all. Like, Kismet, huh?

## A STONE FOR JOEY GALL

His name was/is Joseph Liam Gall and he styled himself a gallowglass, born about 1928 in Dallas — "That was while the word was still a place-name, however, and not, as now, an epithet." Gall materialized upon the newsstands in July, 1963 and may have made his terminal appearance in late 1976.

The 22 Gall titles of recent issue have been bylined as the work of Philip Atlee. That is a nom de plume of James Atlee Phillips. A brief biographical sketch on Phillips appears in the first edition of "The Deadly Mermaid," published by Dell Books and copyrighted in 1954:

JAMES ATLEE PHILLIPS... like the protagonist of this novel, is a man whose whims and duties have taken him far from home. Born in 1915 in Texas and educated at Texas, TCU and the University of Missouri, he came to New York to help publicize Billy Rose's Aquacade and Diamond Horseshoe night club in 1939. After the outbreak of World War 2, he directed flight operations for the China National Aviation Corp. in Dinjan, India, was an editor on the Marine Corps magazine Leatherneck; lived in Mexico and France; and served as head of Amphibian Airways, which serviced the government of the Union of Burma during its civil war. He has written extensively for magazines and the screen, and now lives in Fort Worth.

An earlier Phillips book, "Suitable for Framing," was published by Mcmillan in July 1949, with its first printing in (?) May of that year, followed by a paperback edition from Pocket Books, Inc., with its first printing in September 1950. 'Deadly Mermaid' carries, adjacent to its flyleaf, mention of three other Phillips titles: Pagoda, The Shivering Chorus Girls and The Inheritors.

The body of reference material available for support of the discussion at hand consists of pb editions of Suitable for Framing and the Deadly Mermaid, together with the 22 titles of the Philip Atlee/Joe Gall series.

The late Bill Clark once mentioned to me that one of the early Phillips titles -- I believe it may've been 'Pagoda' -- starred a character named Joe Gall who was, more or less but not precisely congruent to the Joe Gall of the later series.

At any rate, the foregoing helps to shed clarity on one point. Early Joe Gall books used to carry enthused blurbs on their covers in which Raymond Chandler professed to admire the living bejassus out of Philip Atlee's writing. This tended to be a bit confusing, since -- as we all know -- Raymond Thornton Chandler made his exit from this vale of tears at La Jolla, California on March 26, 1959 and the first Joe Gall book came along in July 1963, about four years and four months later.. Was it the first authenticated instance of posthumous admiration? Not really. More probably, Chandler had expressed esteem for an early output of James Atlee Phillips and it had been deftly recycled.

The 22nd Gallbook, "The Last Domino Contract," hove onto the stands in the latter part of 1976 and, on reading, seemed to harboring a note of finality and termination. I'd had the subjective impression that Atlee was getting tired of Gall — perhaps vice versa, quien sabe? — and rumors filtered back multiple-hand from the author to corroborate this. The recent periodicity, per the listing, indicates that another Gallbook sould've been along by now if it was going to appear. Let's list 'em, top of next page, hmm?



1. THE GREEN WOUND (later reissued as Green Wound Contract), copyright 1963, first pb issue dated July '63; 206pp; cover price 40¢. Still my personal odds-on favorite of the whole series.
2. THE SILKEN BARONESS (later: TSB Contract), c. 1964; no month stated; dedicated "To Martha," 142 pps @ 40¢ original cover price.
3. THE PAPER PISTOL CONTRACT; c. 1966, no month; 144 pp @ 50¢.
4. THE DEATH BIRD CONTRACT; c. 1966; 160 pp @ 50¢. A degree of confusion exists as the 3rd and 4th are crosslisted in various listings. A firm and unequivocal sequencing can be found on pp. 26-30 of Book #5, next listed.
5. THE IRISH BEAUTY CONTRACT; . 1966; 127 pp @ 50¢.
6. THE STAR RUBY CONTRACT; c. 1967; 160 pp @ 50¢.
- THE ROCKABYE CONTRACT (#7); c. 1968; 127 pp @ 50¢.
8. THE SKELETON COAST CONTRACT; c. 1968; 144 pp @ 50¢.
9. THE ILL WIND CONTRACT; c. 1969; 144 pp @ 60¢. Perhaps the rarest title of the series in terms of finding copies in 2nd-hand b'stores. Pelz's still looking for a copy.
10. THE TREMBLING EARTH CONTRACT; c. 1969; 143 pp @ 60¢.
11. THE FER-DE-LANCE CONTRACT; c. 1970; printed Jan'71; 143pp @ 75¢.
12. THE CANADIAN BOMBER CONTRACT; c. 1971; p. Aug'71; 144 pp @ 75¢.
13. THE WHITE WOLVERINE CONTRACT; c. 1971; . Dec'71; 143 pp @ 75¢.
14. THE KIWI CONTRACT; "To Vi & Tom Carr of Wellington," c. 1972; p. Feb'72; 143 pp @ 75¢.
15. THE JUDAH LION CONTRACT; c. 1972; p. Sept'72; 144 pp @ 75¢.
- 16 THE SPICE ROUTE CONTRACT; c. 1973; p. Apr. 27, 1973; 142pp @ 75%.
17. THE SHANKILL ROAD CONTRACT; c. 1973; p. Sept'73; 143 pp @ 75¢.
18. THE UNDERGROUND CITIES CONTRACT; c. 1974; p. Feb'74; 159 pp @ 95¢.
19. THE KOWLOON CONTRACT; c. 1974; p. Aug'74; 160 pp @ 95¢.
20. THE BLACK VENUS CONTRACT; c. 1975; p. Feb'75; 159 pp @ 95¢.
21. THE MAKASSAR STRAIT CONTRACT; c. 1976; p. Mar'76; 192 pp @ \$1.25.
22. THE LAST DOMINO CONTRACT; c. 1976; no month specified; 175 pp @ \$1.50.

Ah, the implacable stalk of inflation, with the last title costing nearly four times as much as the first two. Even so, the prompt shopper could've bought the first 22 titles at a tidy \$15.85 (plus sales tax), ending up with 3322 pages (roughly 1,229,508 words) at a net cost of one penny\*for every 776 words or so. Call it two cents per minute, if you're a speed reader and yes, there are vices much more costly.

I am told -- never mind by whom -- that Atlee is partial to booking passage on an old tramp steamer so as to be forced to complete the mss at hand out of sheer boredom. As one who has, at times, willfully and feloniously operated a typewriter while under the influence of divers euphoriant materials, I seem to sense the influence of such agents in some of the Atlee writings. Subjective impressions of some, such as "Rockabye," are that large hunks were whapped down stoned and never read back in the grim light of sobriety. Far, however, from the present commentator to . . . uhh . . . cast the first stone.

A 23rd title could turn up any day to make a nostrum out of all this Nostradamusing and I'd not be surprised, even chagrined. I like the Gallbooks, rough-hewn as they may be. Or a new-bloom'd protagonist could appear; at a guess, probably black, a vet of the Vietnam Fracas; perhaps under one of the previously employed bylines, perhaps not. We may have it on the stands, right now, under another name; quen sabe? --D A Grennell