

morph

Autumn 1959

Edgar Allan Poe

ROLES'S ROLLINGS

Adventures of a LOTS FATER 19

KUALA LUMPUR - 3rd August, 1946

Since the beginning of the year I'd been shuttling back and forth from Singapore to Kuala Lumpur, KL to Penang, back to KL, to Singapore, to KL, spending on average about a month in each place each visit. It had been one big happy tour, doing little work, seeing sights, and making many wonderful friends and acquaintances. It had almost slipped my mind that I was in the army, for I had been detached from the main body of the unit to which I belonged, working with the R.A.F. and with other, Indianised, Air Formation Signals Regiments whose discipline was much less strict. I had been lulled into a rosy-hazed dream-state, in which years might have passed by unheeded had I not been brought back to Earth - bang - by the cold snap of orders from HQ, to report back to Singapore.

I was horrified by my first glimpse of the camp. The journey there from the station was not very promising. The lorry left the city behind and sped through mile after mile of semi-jungle and I wondered where on earth we were going to finish up. Finally we left the metalled road for a dusty pitted track, down which we lurched and rocked for another mile or so. My worst fears were realised when we came upon the encampment. It was an expanse of about four acres enclosed by a high barbed-wire fence, and situated on the North-east coast of the island. There was a thin scattering of coconut palms under which were rows of small tents, each one with its flaps folded and tied back with precision exposing its contents of two iron beds, neatly made with lay-out of mug, eating-irons, plates, and boots, towel, and tiered blankets. Ugh, I thought - and ugh it was. There were morning parades, fatigues, inspections, and all sorts of petty-foggery. Fatigues were: erecting tall bare barbed-wire, spraying DDT over the camp and countryside for miles around, digging 10 foot latrine trenches, digging fresh monsoon trenches after the rains had ruined the previous day's, cook-house duties, and 101 other sordid little pastimes. - When I came on the scene, the camp had no running fresh water and the whole of the supply - for about 500 men - had to be brought in daily by water-wagons.

I was rather disconsolate over the fact that there were hardly any faces I even recognised. Where my old buddies had gone I never knew, and though I had latterly not made much use of their company, I still missed them, for we had been together since the very beginning, 1943, when we had been rookies, seemed a very long time ago. Some major reorganisation had taken place in my eight months' absence, and even the sections I had known had vanished, replaced by new ones with new personnel. The new bods were generally a nice bunch; they had come from some unit at Peshawar, on the N.W. Frontier, and though young, were by no means green. The Young and The Green came out much later and as far as I was concerned they could have gone back by return and not been missed. There wasn't the same esprit about them as about the (comparitively) old guard.

To add to the misery, I was put on guard my second night there. The day after - August Bank Holiday - I was picked to remain on sentry duty at the main gate, for the day.

After a week of piss depressing routine - I had not been detailed for any signal office work - a favour came my way and I was detached to the Regimental Quartermaster's Stores, a small compound isolated from the main camp, in a more densely treed area about half a mile down a narrow dust track. Here I found discipline much less intense and the work not arduous - entailing little more than the issuing and receiving back (sometimes) of stores and equipment. The snag from my point of view was that I had to stay in one night in four, as there were only four of us living in the stores, and each took turn to watch. I felt, unreasonably, that this was an intolerable curb on my liberties.

There were no official guards or parades, and we lived in quiet solitude. Our only boss was the RQ (a major), a regular army man of long service who had come up through the ranks, and was reckoned to be a good type if you didn't cross him. This, count on it, I did. Twice.

(Black Mark One) 'HE'S LYING IN HIS TEETH'

The first time I brought myself to his notice particularly was on one of my nights out. I had just missed the regular 6.00 lorry to Changi, where I intended to go. (Changi was a big airfield, RAF Station and small native village about 8 miles East of our camp, where we also had a small detached section.) It is rather revealing of my compulsion to get away from army surroundings and see people, that I immediately accepted the fact that I'd missed the transport, and set out to walk. There was no urgency about getting there; I was not seeing anyone special, I didn't even know what I'd do when I got there, and I could go any night. But I had to-go.

I got there just after 8 o'clock, and wandered around the village shops and stalls, happy doing just that. A cloth-seller

squatted amongst his bolts of silk and cotton, counting his day's takings. There, under a glaring naked bulb, round which the night insects buzzed and bumped, two Sikhs on a string bed gesticulated heatedly to each other. In a tea-shop the towkay (Chinese proprietor) was fanning himself and watching some of his customers playing a game of mah jong: while from down the road came the clop-clop of a pair of Chinese wooden shoes. From the other side of the dusty lane came the sound of Indian music, and between records, in the comparative quiet, you could just hear the faint ringing tones of a Malay gong from some distant rong-geng. This to me was the Breath of Life, and, as I breathed it in, I was conscious of a super-awareness of the minutiae of the scene about me. The clarity of the air seemed to bring everything into abnormally sharp focus, and although the sensation passed in a flash, the memory of it persisted and I went on my way, elated.

Just then I happened to bump into Ghulam Mohammed, the Camp Contractor, and Suraj Din, the tailor. He asked me where I was going and I said nowhere. They were just on their way to another (RAF) contractor's house, would I like to come and have some food with them? I certainly would, and we went off. I ate a great deal and talked a lot more, until I realised that I had stayed too long and had now missed the returning lorry which left Changi at 11.30.

I was not unduly worried myself at first, and told them I would walk back, just as I had come. The idea seemed to horrify them, and they painted lurid pictures of what happened to people who were waylaid in quiet country lanes by dacoits. This rather shook me, as I had never felt any fear on the many occasions I had walked back to camp long distances, in the late hours, through wild country. I had always felt so in tune, and accepted by the people, that it just never occurred to me to be afraid. But it did now - suddenly, I had qualms. At last after much debate, I recalled the presence in Changi of our local detachment, and I said I would stay the night with them, first ringing the RQ to tell him of my predicament and what I intended to do.

I got through to the RQ (he was in bed), and explained the score, but even over the wires I could see the old-fashioned look on his face. He wouldn't hear of my intention to stop in Changi and "Return to Camp at once" he ordered. So darkness & dacoits notwithstanding, I started out alone, and on foot.

I had not progressed very far - no more than a hundred yards - from the village, when a lorry came trundling along the road. One bound for Elim Camp, as I could see from the Regimental insignia on the bonnet. It was obviously not a duty trip it was making, by the uproar issuing from the rear. I put my thumb into action, and brought it to a halt. As I had

guessed it was a highly unauthorised jaunt organised by some of the reckless linemen.

Barely 15 minutes after my telephone call, I was trying lamely to explain what had happened to a frankly disbelieving RQ. What he did think I don't know - probably that I was trying something on, or simply a bad practical joke. All I had said was that I had after all managed to get a lift, but didn't specify from whom as I didn't want to involve the linemen, who were probably operating a regular racket.

After this escapade it was no wonder the RQ looked at me with a jaundiced eye. But I hadn't finished with him yet; my next brush with him was as

THE NEW SPECIALIST; or, The Case of the Sub-Standard Pissole

Our urinals were made by the simple process of boring a deep hole in the ground, and sticking a long-piped funnel in it. Their life varied, but in good ground they lasted several months.

This one started simply enough. A new one was needed, so I was detailed for the job. I drew an earth-borer from the stores - of a type similar to that used in planting telegraph poles, but of a gauge of about 4 inches - and set to work. The idea was to sink the hole as far as the shaft of the borer permitted, and then to add extensions to this shaft until the required depth was reached: in this case, according to regulations, not less than 6 feet if I remember rightly.

I ground away merrily for about two feet without any difficulty, after which the going got a bit stiff, as was to be expected. Soon, however, I was exerting all my strength, and the inches accumulated less rapidly. Not wishing to seem feeble I struggled manfully on, until the going got so hard, that, not wishing to bust a gut in the doubtful cause of hygiene, I reported to the RQ that I had reached the limit and would approximately 3 feet do. No, it would not do. Go back and drill some more, until I had reached the regulation depth. So, beaten I returned to my post - or, rather, my hole. After much straining and sweating, I managed at last to make a couple more revolutions, taking the borer deeper, but was not able to raise the instrument up with the loosened earth. This time I struggled in vain, and I was obliged to go back to the RQ and make it clear to him that I could progress no further without assistance. He favoured me with a look that would turn a lemon green with envy, and detailed my two store mates to lend a hand. Together we wheeled round some more without much difficulty, but when we came to try to lift the thing cut, found it was stuck. I wasn't going to go to the RQ a third time, so one of the others went. After a time he came back and said he had obtained permission to procure two Jap POWs from the main camp, (where there were hundreds of them). This was the solution, I knew. If

two Japs couldn't raise the borer, then it was beyond the bounds of possibility, for one average Jap soldier is the equal of at least two average BCRs in man-power. Their muscular development and strength was fantastic.

So our Japs came, were shown what was wanted. The So our Japs came, were shown the trouble and simple signs were made to indicate what was wanted. The three of us and the RQ too now, stood back to watch the powers in action, and grunting loudly in Japanese, they pushed off. Wonders - they made about six more complete revolutions, before coming to a stop. They couldn't get it up. We all tried, but even the concerted efforts of the six of us were in vain. The RQ was getting excited by this time, and with compressed lips and clenched fists, he stood there like Canute before the waves. He came to a decision.

"Get the lorry, and a hook and tackled" he ordered. and we scurried to his command. We looped the chain over the bough of the nearest tree - it happened to be a rubber tree - hooked the ends on to the lorry and to the projecting shaft end, and had the driver more off. There was a squealing and grinding of motors and chains, a pause and then the tree gave. The only thing to do was to hook the chains over another tree, a bigger one further off and try again. The RQ was not one to be beaten by a mean hole. More grinding and roaring, and then a stop, the motor revved and we held our breaths wondering what would give this time - the tree, the shaft handle or the engine. Then, amazing, the shaft began to rise slowly, very slowly, resisting every inch, until at last we saw the bottom and the 6-inch cylinder of earth it carried. The two hinged blades were done for - crumpled like paper.

The RQ conceded that it would be impractical to try and deepen the hole further, and it remained sub-standard. We relaxed, and used it gratefully.

Considering the first escapade and my part in the second, it was no wonder that my term of service at the RQ's Stores came to such an early end. After a mere three weeks respite there, I was shot back again to the main camp.

Back at camp I made friends with the Indian contractor and his associates. There was the dhobie crew who occupied a small brick bungalow at one corner of the camp and did their clothes threshing, ironing and drying there. There was Maraj Din, a fair Panjabi Mussalman from Amritsar; David, an Indian Christian who was a bit of a lad - fond of the bottle and took ganja (a crude form of hashish); Ram Dari a very dark Hindu from Bihar, who contracted gonorrhoea while I was there, and asked me what to do; and another Hindu called Mangru. This mixed bunch lived together in complete amity much as mixed communities did

all over India before the communist inspired demagogues. the impoverished students indoctrinated with half-assimilated Marxist dogma, and the half-baked professional trouble-makers did their vile work, and aroused the masses to intercommunal war.

At the other corner of the camp was the smaller bungalow of the tailor, Saraj Din, an elderly typed known as "Chacha" (uncle); the hairdresser, a young goof called Hussein; the contractor himself, Ghulam Mohammed; and a nondescript character called Khan. I spent a lot of time in the Dhobi bungalow and we were all good friends.

A few days after returning to the main camp from the RQ's I landed a job at Changi airfield on the telephone switchboard. I didn't care a lot for this line of work and I'd never been on more than a 200-line board, but this was an 800-line job.

It was about this time that I first made friends with Michael Scott. Michael was a most interesting character, and we soon found our ways and ideas followed similar paths. He was the youngest of three children of a wealthy Kensington family, whose fortunes came from a grandfather with Ceylon tea estates; and had been reading medicine at London University prior to being called up. He had no real need to work for a living, having personal funds and allowances, and when he arrived East he changed his mind and resolved to make it his future in some way. With this object in view he was devoting his energies to learning Cantonese, and was making quite good progress judging from the noise he made with the local (Singapore) Chinese. He had already mastered Malay, a language which I had not yet attempted, but with his example, encouragement and direction, I quickly learned the simple vocabulary - the grammar is almost non-existent.

He had first started Mandarin as this is the lingua franca of China, but as the dialect of the Singapore Chinese was Cantonese, and because it was in his view, then, the more euphonic dialect, he took that up.

The Chinese languages are many and varied, and although most of them are written the same with minor variations, the pronouncing of the ideographs is usually different from province to province. For instance the word I is ngo in Cantonese, wo in Mandarin, goa in Hokkien, but is written 我 in all three. Because Mandarin has four basic tones and Cantonese has nine, I too felt that Cantonese would thus be more pleasant to listen to than Mandarin. (I have since learned from good sources that Mandarin is in fact the most beautiful of Chinese languages to speak and hear). So having made a false start with Mandarin, I began again with Cantonese. (Later when I had some more time in Kuala Lumpur, I found Cantonese was little use to me as most of the Chinese there came from a different province, and spoke Hokkien! If I hadn't wasted so much time in trying

to forget twice as much as I was trying to learn, I'd have got on three times as quick. As it is I never made much headway. I was learning Malay at the same time, and again I had not the same keen interest in things Chinese as I had in Indian -- and passion is the best master.

The tones I mentioned above are inherent in each syllable or word of the Chinese group of languages and are theoretically invariable, but to make matters more difficult, they are modified by adjacent and dependent words. The word itself is quite inflexible. In Cantonese the word pin can mean whip, flat, transform, dispute (each is written differently), according to whether you say it on a rising, falling or level note, on a high pitch or low. This gives six different tones. The other three are glottal checks on the upper, middle and lower pitch. This applies to the final "consonant" in a word which is not fully pronounced, e.g. pit, -pak, shap, peh, where the t, k, p, h are not fully pronounced, but held in check - like the Cockney bu'er - an example of the Chinese final 'h'. (sic)

Heaven Earth Water Fire River Mountain Wind Thunder These were the long-range signs. They were developed and in the 12th Century B.C. 64 combinations were made. The first picture writing began in the early 3rd millennium B.C. Some of these early styles were: Li-ching-chuan (jade-musical), Tieh-Ho-shen-chuan (iron-wire-steel) e.g.

Later all irregular characters were dropped & made to occupy an imaginary square.

Ku-Hen is another ancient script.

Li-Shu or Official Style came in 4th Century B.C. A later form of this is Pa-Fen -

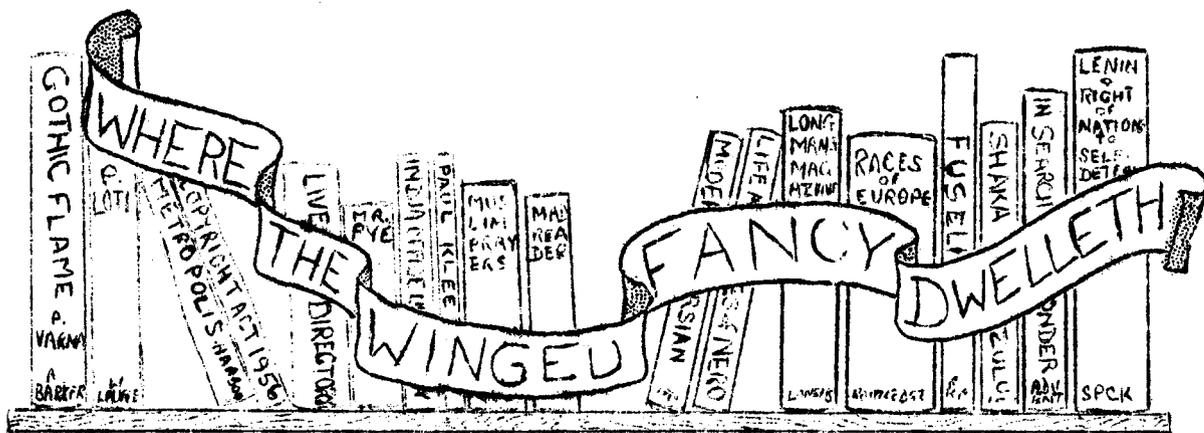
Ts'ao-Shu - Grass Style

To be continued in MORPH 22 (D.V) (I.A)

Modern script.

寫 他 來 大 你
不 生 說 我 有
了 日 同 要 一
個

Hsing-Shu or Running style



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|---|--|
| 1112 A Night to Remember. Walter Lord. Corgi. | 1145 Yorkshire West Riding. Pevsner. Bound Penguin |
| 1113 Darkness and the Light. Olaf Stapledon. Methuen, 1942 | 1146 Guardian of the Grail. Whiteland. Jarrolds, '59 |
| 1114 New York City Guide & Almanac, 1957-8 | 1147 Games of Patience. W. Jones. 1904 |
| 1115 History of Astronomy. G. Abetti. Sidgwick, 1954 | 1148 End of Eternity. I. Asimov. Panther, 1959 |
| 1116 Talks on Book Collecting. Ed. P.H. Muir. Cassell, 1952 | 1149 Simplified Cataloguing Rules. P.L.A. 1959 |
| 1117 Book Collecting: More letters to Everyman. P.H. Muir. | 1150 Practical Key to the Canarese Language. 1907 |
| 1118 Pope Jacynth & Other Supernatural Tales. Vernon Lee | 1151 Incredible Adventures. A. Blackwood. 1914 |
| 1119 Lord Byron. Eileen Bigland. Cassell, 1956 | 1152 Book Auction Records, 1926-7 |
| 1120 World out of Mind. J.T. McIntosh. Museum, 1955 | 1153 The Transvaal Trouble. J. Martineau. Murray, 1899 |
| 1121 History of India. J.C. Powell-Price. Nelson, 1958 | 1154 The Transvaal from Within. Fitzpatrick, 1899. |
| 1122 Devil Rides Out. Wheatley. Arrow Bks. | 1155 The Rat. P. Bottomo. P. Allan, 1926 |
| 1123 Down to Eternity. R. O'Connor. Gold Medal Bks | 1156 Five Children & It. E. Nesbit. T.F. Unwin, 4th imp. |
| 1124 Beyond the Isms. Olaf Stapledon. Secker, 1942 | 1157 Story of the Amulet. E. Nesbit. Unwin, 2nd imp. |
| 1125 Verdict on England. K.L. Bauben. Lion Press, Lahore | 1158 Not at Night. Ed C.C. Thomson. 12th imp. 1932 |
| 1126 Day It Rained Forever. Ray Bradbury. Hart-Davis, '59 | 1159 Tales of Chinatown. Sax Rohmer. 4th imp. 1923 |
| 1127 Complete Bk Of Romance. Moreland & Mott-Smith. | 1160 Mobn of Israel. Haggard. Newnes Spec. Film Ed. |
| 1128 Modern English. Hago. W.J. Fowler | 1161 A Winter Pilgrimage. Haggard. Long's Silver Lib |
| 1129 Second Foundation. I. Asimov. Digit | 1162 Bandersnatch. T.E. Ryves. Grey Walls, 1950 |
| 1130 Pyramids of Egypt. I.E.S. Edwards. Penguin | 1163 Beyond Human Ken. Ed. J. Merrill. Grayson, 1958 |
| 1131 Days of My Life. Haggard. 2 vols, 1926 | 1164 Human. E. J. Merrill. Lion Bk. N.Y. 1954 |
| 1132 The Chrysalids. J. Wyndham. Penguin | 1165 Girl with the Hungry Eyes. Avon, 1949 |
| 1133, Out of the Depths J. Wyndham. Ballantyne | 1166 Lily of the Valley. Balzac. Newnes, Homes Lib. |
| 1134 The Power. F. Robinson. Corgi | 1167 The Eye Goddess. O.G.S. Crawford. Phoenix, 1957 |
| 1135 A Case of Conscience. J. Bligh. Faber, 1959 | 1168 Magic of Aleister Crowley. J. Symonds. Muller |
| 1136 Seeds of Light. Edmund Cooper. Hutchinson | 1169 Magic & the Magician (re. E. Nesbit) Streetfield '59 |
| 1137 500 Hundred Years of Printing. S.H. Steinberg. Peng. | 1170 Record Collecting. B. Semeonoff. Oakwood, 1951 |
| 1138 Revolt in 2100. R. Heinlein. Digit | 1171 The Science Fiction Novel. Heinlein et al. Advent |
| 1139 The Body Snatchers. J. Finney. Beacon Bk | 1172 VOR. Jas Bligh, Corgi, 1959 |
| 1140 Artists & Art Terms. Hyamson. (c.1940) | 1173 The American Woman. E.J. Dingwell. Signet Bk. |
| 1141 Write Your Own Bestseller. M. McKenna. Jarrolds | 1174 Doors of Perception & Heaven & Hell. Huxley. Peng. |
| 1142 Lady Chatterley's Second Husband. J.D. Crafac, 1935 | 1175 Dict. of Artists & Art. P. & L. Murray. Penguin. |
| 1143 A Princess of Mars. Burroughs. Grosset, N.Y. (1917?) | 1176 Cinema Today. Pageant of Progress Srs. O.U.P. |
| 1144 Screen Process Printing. W. Clemence. Blandford, 1959 | 1177 Hndbk of Science Fiction & Fantasy. D.H. Tuck 2 vols. |

The above a -- oh excuse me. The above books were acquired in the six months February to Mid-August. There are several reasons why the list is long even so. For one thing the National Book Sale was in Feb. and I naturally cashed in on that: nos 1114-1121, 1167 and a few more uncatalogued as they are not here at home. Then about April I wrote to Digit (paper-back publishers), complaining that they hadn't notified me of the publication of Heinlein's

Revolt in 2100, and ordering 50 with the stern command not to forget again (they did too, Skylark of Space came out unannounced). They sent an apologetic letter and complimentary copies of all their back(sf)titles. As I didn't particularly want half of them, I exchanged them for more desirable ones held in stock. A club auction added four more: 1162-65, and an expedition to Preston added 1155-60. Many others were complimentary copies from publishers' representatives - 1135,36,44,45,46.

From now on the number of new books acquired will be very much reduced: details and explanations will be found elsewhere in this ish. The result of this will probably be that I will read my backlog, so that the books commented upon here in this column will not necessarily be found in the listings. In the sketchy notes I have on the books read, only a few were not my own.

In this category is "THE LORD OF THE RINGS". I borrowed this set from the shop, and am now very near to the end of the last volume. What a treasure here lies indeed. A veritable proof that Romance is not yet dead. I've been a long time coming to it I know - it's been published 4-5 years. I had always intended to try it, then when I did I became bogged down in the rather indigestible (it seemed) preface, and I didn't survive the first pages of Chapter 1. That was about 8 months ago. Vine's opinion of it (against) then swayed me, and I gave up the idea. Then a holiday at the Willis's turned the balance the other way. Persevere to the 3rd chapter, Walt said, and you'll be hooked. Persevere I did, and hooked I was. I lived in a strange new world, the pages fled by and even the OMPA mailing went unnoted until the end of July - unprecedented for me, who am more enthusiastic than many it would seem. The whole fabulous land the author has created exists so vividly in the mind's eye that one is almost persuaded to accept it as fact. The atmosphere of each locality is wonderfully conveyed, and each character is fully and personally alive to you. Not only does each character speak for himself, but over the broad sweep of the story, the characteristics of each of the various races are brought out. And above all, all is told in such beautiful language as to bring tears of gratitude to the watcher's eyes. I say watcher, because one is not conscious of the act of reading: the effect is of standing in the field of events observing, but unobserved. This book is in the nature of a sport, like the Titus Groan trilogy; Stop Press: I have just been told by the publisher's representative that the third book in the Gormenghast series will be out in September. This was before the strike had become so prolonged, so it is possible indeed probable that it will not be postponed till after Christmas, as many publishers have had to do with their Autumn books. And does anyone know of any exegetical writings on the Tolkien books: fan or pro?

Of the science-fiction "pure and simple" recently read: I felt "The Outward Urge" (John Wyndham & L. Parkos) was very weak, poorly written and badly conceived. "The Seeds of Light" was only just passable. The final result of the quest became

too obvious too soon; the rest - the story - was shreddy. I didn't quite know what to make of "A Case of Conscience". I shall read it a second time, that's certain. Superficially it is quite a dull, pedestrian story. That it attempts to be no more, is made obvious, and the theological question is all. I don't think fiction should be that didactic. But on the other hand, here is a mind shattering problem book, a poser in Dogma that searches some pretty deep places of the mind.

"The Devil Rides Out". A book of this type, a classic you might call it, is one of those that should be read quite early on in one's career. I have just read it. It is a good book, tho not only is it sadly dated in style ("with one panther-like spring the Duke thrust him aside and bounded from the room") but it also suffers from being a prototype, and like most prototypes it is rather crude, but vigorous. Wheatley obviously owes a debt to Crowley's works and reputation. In passing I was rather shocked by some of the gauche writing: Chap.2, "The fellow's a mute," whispered the Duke. "Deaf and dumb."!

The next one I want to mention is "The Golden Pharaoh", but unfortunately, as I only borrowed this, I have no note of the author, or translator - for it was written in French. All I have down is the publisher - Burke; and the book was written primarily for juveniles. But the subject of King Tutankhamon has always fascinated me, and lacking the definitive three volume work of Carter & Mace (Tomb of Tutankhamon), I felt this might be a reasonable substitute. In addition the book seemed to be of quality, having won all sorts of awards and prizes. The reading is swift and exciting, and in parts, I was moved by the description of the seal of the famous Egyptologists: Belzoni, by whose persistent effort the key to the entrance of the Great Pyramids was found; Champollion, and his precocious boyhood enthusiasm for ancient tongues, and his eventual translation of the hieroglyphics of the Rosetta Stone; Howard Carter and his most incredible tenacity and faith in the discovery of the Tomb of the Boy King in the Valley of the Kings. This last is an epic tale, surely the greatest in the history of archaeology. The fact that some inaccuracies are present did not detract from the pleasure I got from this book. (For instance Champollion did not translate the hieroglyphs unaided and from scratch as the book infers.) I'd like to recommend this to everyone. It also includes a very clever historical reconstruction of the contemporary attempt of robbers to plunder the tomb, and why they weren't successful. For this was the only Royal Tomb in Egypt that survived untouched since ancient times, containing all the furnishings and accoutrements as installed at the burial. (The reason why is told in "The Golden Pharaoh".)

I'll just skim quickly through the rest of the list, as I haven't much to say about them.

A night to Remember, and Down to Eternity are both books on the Titanic disaster. The former, and best known, is much more

graphic and gives a sense of immediacy; the latter gives more background, and at the end, gives a better summing up, but both are very good. Verdict on England is an Indian's reply to Beverly Nichols's Verdict on India. Lady Chatterley's Second Husband was nothing like D.H. Lawrence & it was translated from the French. 1146 is a resumé of the Arthurian legend. The Rat is the book of the film and illustrated with some stills, with Ivor Novello as The Rat a haunting, nostalgic tale. Lily of the Valley is a fictional portrait of the English woman, Jane Digby, Lady Ellenborough, with whom Balzac had a short affair when she was in Paris. This is the woman of whom I have written several times in this column - perhaps you may remember my rhapsodic appraisal of her life in "Portrait of Ianthe"; and in "The Wilder Shores of Love", the book which, I might say, has influenced my reading more than any other book in recent years - with the exception of "I, Claudius". And it is now available to all in Penguins. Get it - get it - get it. And when you have read it, thank me for introducing you to four of the most incredible women, and then go back to Morphs 9, 14, 16, 18 and maybe others, in which I have mentioned books about them.

I keep promising myself that every Bradbury I buy will be the last. In this new one of his, there is no progress. The same old recipe, the same saccharine similes. The Times Lit. Supp. expresses my sentiments exactly, so I can do no better than to quote them: "...his imagery reminds one of that section of the Readers' Digest which used to be headed 'Picturesque Speech and Pattern'...The Day It Rained Forever (reads) like the glossy advertising copy to be found in Life or the New Yorker where the copywriter is advertising the 1960 Chevrolet, and begins, 'When you were a boy, you dreamed big.'", and so on. True?

There is something very convincing about Wyndham's writing. Something beyond which even the sf fans judgement has no bearing. There must be for it to have caught the general public's fancy so. For his first three (Triffids, Kraken, Chrysalids), are among the best sellers on the Penguin list; no mean feat, when you consider his rivals - Homer, Hemingway, Wodehouse and Plato.

As for Tuck's new 'Index', I can only gasp at the work it must have entailed. It is almost flawless in production and text. What application to carry through an operation like this not only once, but twice - the second time being almost double the work.

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WANTED: SHE by Rider Haggard in the (US) Armed Services Edition. this is a paper back issued during the war to US & other forces. Also want an American edition of She, published by Grosset and Dunlap about 1926, containing stills from the film of that period.

# IT SAYS 'ERE'

OFF TRAILS (Wild) And that's that says Bobbie looking back on a year's OE-ing well done. Many thanks are your due, but it is a thankless task isn't it? Hi, Ron.

MARSOLO (Hayes) A mag with a striking and confident air. Some things I went for - the Stigmatized Nun, the USA/Canada deals, the Mouse and the Centipede joke; but not curling. Thought the letter section was a bit off, too.

PEBBLES IN THE DRINK (Harvard & Dodsworth) - Hhey! Illegal, illegal: non-members) I go along with this.

TALES FROM THE OUBLIETTE (Mercer) Not much real progress thish.

LET GEORGE SAY IT (Raybin) If you examine my text, George, you will see that I didn't say in as many words that Ground Zero was a phewd-zine. Awright, awright, that's what I meant. And I'll stand corrected, as GZ certainly does not consist largely of feud-type material as I said. And it's not your fault (or Belle's, since you were commenting on-my comment on her zine!) that I got the idea into my head that GZ is what I said.

ARCHIVE (Mercer) Merced & Worst. You don't say anything of particular import this time - but I love the way you say it.

PHENOTYPE (Eney) Read. No comment - most unusual, by Jove.

BLUNTS (Sandy) 10. Vind, your voice (typer?) will be missed in OMPA, is this a sign that you'll appear elsewhere?? 11 Spring Song. 12. Huh! Hah!

INTRO TO SYNERGETICS (Hayes) Sounds faintly like Dianetics and General Semantics. What's this Round Robin Lark?

ERG (Jeeves) And a warm welcome to you. What a pity you've been missing Tales from the Oubliette (or have you?): 'Cos you are in the running with you criminal Kornan Tale. - Satele lite Data - just what I wanted. I've been collecting gen on air speed records, this'll go nicely with it.

NANTZ (Gerding) Your prognosis of the Great American Vice and Sickness is keen. Can't agree - disagree, as I'm not in possession of enough facts, but your "no sense of historical values" sounded pretty accurate. That this is the fz of an experienced ed. is apparent. Looking forward to more.

- JD-ARGASSY 43 (Hickman) V.G. indeed. 9th Aug. JD-A46 came.
- ROI (Ashworth) Loved your Gibberings and I nearly choked on the last. To me your Mescaline Experiment was the most interesting thing in the mailing. I've been trying to get hold of some of this stuff ever since Huxley wrote about it. Where, melad, did you get it? Mayhew's short bit on the results were not so good as Huxley's, Philip Toynbee's even less so. Toynbee said he had a "full-blooded hangover". I have a small collection of cuttings on this bizz if you're interested Mal. Keep off Lysergic Acid tho - dangerous (IF you can get it). Worth waiting for. ROI I mean, not Lysergic Acid
- SWAN SONG (Harris) Good for you Chuck. Good for you Bob. Good for us faans.
- ESPRIT (Buckmaster) This zine should be subtitled the magazine for enquiring minds: amongst which Daphne's is the most enquiring. One system of Anarchy is described in Kropotkin's book "Mutual Aid". Witchcraft discussed sounds a lot different to Crowley's type: spells, invocations to spirits, qabala, grand rituals and hierarchies. Your lecturer sounded like a fugitive from the Homeopathic / Suncult/Spiritualist set. Exceptionally interesting fmz, but (like mine) badly duped. (E.10 arrived early Jun, ta.)
- PEALS (Dietz) If our braces is your suspenders, and our suspenders is your garters, what do you use for garters? Our garters are bands of elastic to keep up stockings. Also don't you use "braces" for anything, so we can extend the chain the other way? Sorry, but I missed your eyes! If they are the colour I'm thinking of, then they are my favourite. I call it amber - a sort of light translucent brownish gold. (Very rare, I've only seen 3 or 4 in my life. New York is quite a complicated city topographically, it always puzzled me that it should be largely on Long Is. and that the bit the other side is an island too, and the bit on the real mainland, is only small and unimportant. Have you any idea why they call it The Bronx? It's odd why some places get a definite article put in front. Like The Panjab, The Gambia, The Argentine, The Ukraine. You never hear of The Germany, The Canada or The Texas.
- 52ND ST (Linwood) Not enthusiastic - sorry. I like some Jazz books; interpretative, biographical, w.h.y., but E.C.'s Treas. of Jazz didn't appeal to me, and I've never read any Jazz fiction. (Don't misunderstand me, tho, - I'm not aggr your having done it. Your writings are usually worth a while, it's that they don't always appeal to me.)
- SIZAR (Burn) I can't agree with you. If the Mob & common Herd can't get their booze when and where they want it, then the Law should be changed. The majority shall rule. The Ego/Id piece was a good idea, but I think would have improved with keeping in the cupboard a bit, and then re-writing. I liked it though.
- THE LESSER FLEA (JKClarke) One might say this was a stimulating

magazine; which it is superficially. But probing under the argumentative patter, one is forced to the conclusion that much of the thought is loose & the phrasing looser; and the direction of reasoning is changed to suit the argument and adopted "line". This conclusion must of course be supported by instances: so turn to page - dammit Joy number 'em - (3), the last 3 or 4 lines: "a certain amount ((of newspaper reportage)) has to be taken on trust or life would be impossible". The last phrase I would call "loose", as it's meaning conveys so little. Then, as she herself says "To reduce this sort of argument to absurdity how do you know that Luton beat Norwich in the Cup?" (My underlining) - it shouldn't be necessary to expatiate on the muddle-headedness of that "argument", surely! On page (11) line 25, she does an about face and says "Newspapers are ruled by people who dictate what are to be the policies, and who chuck out to the w.p.b. photos that do not tie in with that policy." Come now, Joy, you can't have it both ways; whatever you might say, there are two different view-points here. I hate to waste space in what may seem needless bickering, but when a woolly-minded woman in a "disillusioned" (about me) moment, considers one childish..mean..cowardly..lazy", one ought to take steps to see that she gets her illusions back at least, if one despairs finally of tact. As a matter of interest, has no-one ever told you how thoughtless you are, Joy, of other people's feelings? Look at that para. where you enumerate the number of stars in the Pleiades you can see; and continue: "Oh I forgot, Bobbie, sorry of course you would not be able to check on this. Seeing 5 is jolly good for you. ..I personally can see eleven". You probably just do not realise you're doing it, but I'd watch it if I were you - otherwise people might think you were trying to be spiteful, catty, malicious, abusive and contentious. (Hey, you want to get one of these Thesauruses, they're purdy good) This is of course quite off the main track of the original discussion, which is after all only a matter of opinion & which I don't propose now to pursue further. Everyone is entitled to hiser opinions, but when they begin ignoring logic, become emotional because people don't agree with them, and insulting to such persons, reasonable discussion has to be dropped, because they cannot use reason. It seems such people can only understand emotional vendettas and personal feuds. What right-minded fan wants to have his name linked with the foul abuse that has been mouthed and published on the Kyle/Lietz pantomime, for instance. And if what Joy said about Kyle on page (9) (re. poisoning him via Ruth K.) isn't abuse, then what is? So I'm neutral and both sides pile in on me - god help me. God help us all. Now, let's go on to something nicer like

WR (Mills) I'm very much with Bob Leman on the subject of Top40 type stuff. Liked the ads, Grits, Grist & J-P Scream. A most enjoyable mag altogether.

Although time presses - ghu! today is ONE DAY AFTER DEAD-LINE - there are one or two things I want to burble about: like that reference in Winged Fancy to why I would be getting fewer new books. The reason for this is that I have left my job at Chester as a (new) bookshop assistant, and hit out on my own.

During the recent LaSFAs holiday in mid-June, whilst the main mob was sunning itself in Ibiza, I paid a visit to Walt in Belfast, & on my return I scouted round Liverpool for premises. I didn't find any for myself initially, but I knew Norman wanted to move, so I found him a new place, and moved into his old offices. Put like that it sounds quick, easy and effortless. I assure you it was not - we are still sorting ourselves out. Now I am to be found (sometimes) at 12A Rumford Place, and Norman is at 81 Dale Street, one of the busiest streets in the city. I am dealing in second-hand and antiquarian books. So you see my library will increase even more from purchases of libraries and so on. For this reason it will be impossible in most cases to give the price paid for a single book bought with a quantity of others, so I have discontinued the idea.

What a pleasure it is to be back again, working in a living city. Chester aspires to the title 'city' as it glorified by a cathedral - surely the ugliest in Britain, -but it is little more than a village: pop: 45,500. Liverpool, "dirty ol' town", tho' it is (in parts) like any city's worst areas, is a live entity; bustling, thriving, busy with the present and looking toward the future - unlike Chester, living in its past, the aristocracy and county families in one of the last ditches. In a big city (Liverpool's working population is about 1,500,000) people aren't so curious about how much their neighbours are earning, who their parents are and whether they are U or non-U - so much more egalitarian.

When I was reviewing a fanzine recently, I said I could hear the editor's voice reading the words. Actually I find it quite interesting, because it does not always follow. It struck me while reading a US fmz, that the fellow was writing American or rather USese (there jes' aint no word for it). and I was reading it in English, naturally enough. Canadians, Australians, Irish, & Bronxers (what's the correct word here, Belle?) all read the English language in their own respective accents, unless they happen to know the writer. In many cases when the writer is known, it is possible, indeed likely, that he will read it in the voice of the writer. What the essentials are for the voice coming thro' I don't know because I find some of our best writers "voiceless", while others of lesser note come thro' loud & clear. For instance I can hear very clearly Archie Mercer, Ethel Lindsay, Boyd Raeburn, George Raybin, Bob Madle, Pete Taylor, NGW, Bobbie Wild, Joy Clarke and many more. Whereas the following are "dumb" and I read them in my own accent: Walt Willis, Mal Ashworth, Sandy Sanderson, Ellis Mills, Ken Bulmer, Daphne Buckmaster, Ted Tubb (!). Make of that lot what you can/will.

- (2) List any of the following who have expressed particular interest and knowledge of Space (a) your clergyman (b) doctor (c) dentist (d) lawyer (e) clerks in shops and stores (f) policemen (g) bus drivers (h) taxi-drivers (i) children & (j) others .....
- (3) Did you read or hear much about Space before Sputnik went up?
- (4) Have you talked about Sputnik more/about the same/less than about other front-page news items?
- (5) Have you talked about Sputnik to anyone with whom you usually don't discuss news events?.....If so, why?.....
- (6) Have you listened especially to discussion of the technology and/or implications of Sputnik by any particular persons to whom you don't especially attend with regard to news events? .....If so, why?

Part 3. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT SPACE?

- (1) Do you personally feel that the effort to put man into Space is good or bad?.....Why?.....
- (2) Do you think those efforts will have any effect on your own life?.....If so, what effects do you foresee ?
- (3) Would you like to be one of the first people to explore Space? .....Why?.....
- (4) How do you feel about the Russians' putting a dog into Space?
- (5) Are you shocked by their willingness to let it die alone, or do you believe it is necessary for animals to test whether Space is safe for Man?.....
- (6) What aspect (or aspects) of Sputnik I and Sputnik II made the deepest impression on you? (placing the most important first. ....
- (7) What difference do think it would make to the human race if other life equivalent to human life were to be found in the universe?.....
- (8) Suppose this extraterrestrial life were superior to the human race, what then?.....
- (9) When you ponder such questions, do you think not enough/ enough/too much attention is being to scientific research?..
- (10) Do you think not enough/enough/too much attention is being paid to research in the humanities?.....
- (11) What do you think of the outlook for homo sapiens?.....
- (X) Religion?.....(Y) Religious?.....

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Please return to John Roles, 26 Pine Grove, Waterloo, Liverpool 22.

A molecule saw

Another

From afar and thither hurried

With irresistible urge

For conjugation.

Alas -

The bodies met

In conflagration.

What a pity!

C.T.

Hey, Joy! I've now heard Tom Lehrer. Norman has a record and I heard it-on Sunday. Very much like acid drops. My preferences are The Old Dope Pedler, The Irish Ballad, and the Waltz Songs.

You must excuse that effort at the top - it just came out.

I was going to mention a book I'd read (mostly) "The Great Tide", about the awful flood disasters on the Essex coast some years ago, but Chuck is not with us anymore. Perhaps you London folks may be interested in it. It reads rather like a minutely detailed Titanic tragedy, in that every minute of the bad hours in each different location is described, with personal anecdotes

Well it's now 10:00 p.m. and if I'm to get this off tomorrow I must start the presses rolling. - Actually, as I type this everything is duped, bar pp 7,15 & this, 16. The exception a 1 point about this issue is that it is the first I have produced-entirely on my Gestetner-type rotary. (Excluding the cover) As you will patiently observe the duping is not of the best. But I am getting the bugs out of it one by one. The faint blotches that appear I have now traced, with the help of observations by Vinç Clarke, to the top drum (not the bottom one Vinç, strangely enough). This drum has two or three fissures in it, which tho' I would not have tho't it, interfere quite considerably with the distribution of the ink. But I have just discovered, (only on pp. 13,14 that heavily inking on these fissures seems to solve it to a certain extent.

And that is the end of MORPH No. 21. Published and written by: - JOHN D. ROLES, 26 PINE GROVE, WATERLOO, LIVERPOOL, 22, ENGLAND .

16 Last minute note. I find I'm fresh out of paper here, so amusing only thing to hand - sorry. Squash the quizz.

MEET (Burn) Good run down on NZ fans.

SATAN'S CHILD (Ratigan) The Women/Men argument. I have thot at times on the question of women's high heels. I suppose a time will come, fashion being what it is, when heels will come lower, but stilts are so In that I can see no end to the fad. High heels fulfil a double purpose. They have a sexy angle, in that they lend a woman - if she can master the really high heels - a coquettish carriage. (In reality they must be agony, but they wear it well). The other factor is the simple effect of being lifted off the ground another 2/3 inches - bringing her nearer to man in height. The result is she wants to be accepted as an equal by men, also she wants to be his sex partner. An insoluble paradox of this sick age we live in. Dorothy you'd probably be interested in "The American Woman" by Prof. Dingwell, now just issued in pap or back by Mentor Books (Muller's in this country). A Revolution indeed!! But Eddie Jones, Bill Harry and I discovered the Macabre in 1957 at the Worldcon. Shame on you for running out.

PERINDEUS (Moorcock) Pity Bill Harry's gafia - he's discovering women - he's such a good artist. Like your-macabre slant.

KAKTUS (Hall) Beat beats me. I don't think the movement - if you can call it one - has anything; more than a good P.R.O.

THE LAST SPLOTCH (Mills/Vondruska) Woweee! Here's reproduction!

JD-ARGASSY (Hickman) 45, 46 & 47. I just can't keep pace with these - I'm sure I've missed some somewhere. Illo on p347 held my gaze. My first feeling about her bra (ridicule), changed ultimately to a belief in its possibility, but a final incredulity as to its practicality. The Barr Bra will not be every woman's cuppa. I'm for an all-illo mag. There have been such before, but I've felt that there was little or no editing of them: just-bunches of individual sheets stapled together. Something must be done to make a magazine of them; if only to give them all a line frame, or uniform titling; something to make an ordered parade of talent rather than a loose milling crowd. You get me? I have 2 corrections to Bob's report. M.A.D stands for Mersey And Dee-side. The River Dee is the river parallel to the Mersey & separates the Wirral peninsula (part of Cheshire County) from Wales, as pitcured here:

Secondly: Dave Newman had nothing to do with the writing or production of "Last & First Fen". It was written largely by John Owen and Stan Nuttall, with additions from Pat Doolan (now Milnes), Norman, me and perhaps fragments by one ortwo others. The music was selected by Stan Nuttall, but Norman Shorrocks alone had the long trying task of dubbing it in, and "producing" it generally.

