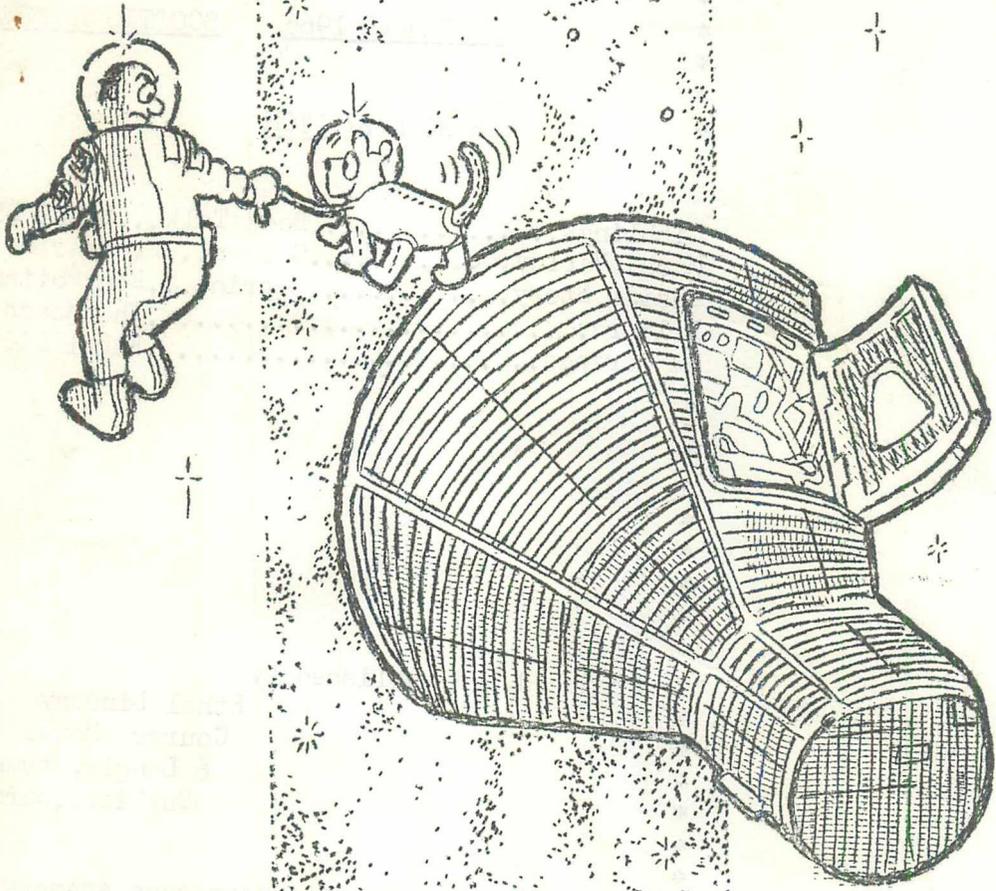
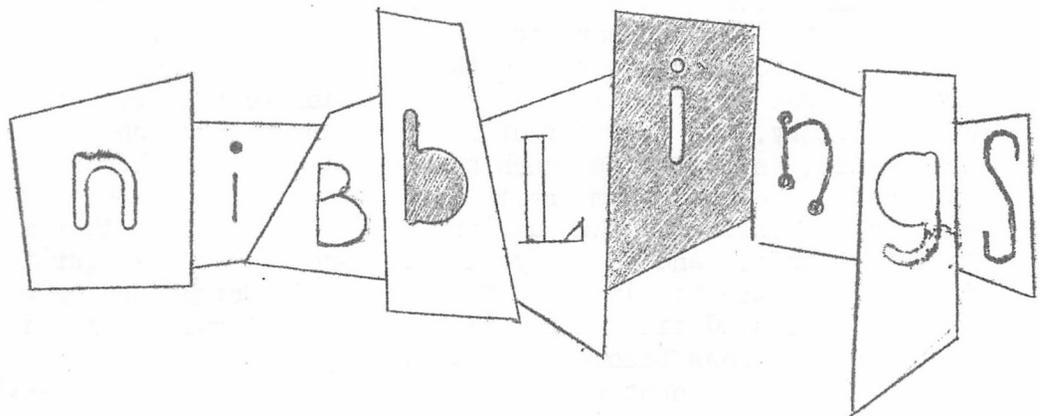


# SCOTTISH



Arom





Frances Varley wrote a letter of comment upon the last issue, a most unusual event. In this she suggested that I next discuss the writer Josephine Tey; that she would be interested in my comparison of Tey and the authoress I wrote about in the last issue, Allingham. Well: with Allingham the word that first springs to mind is atmosphere; with Tey the word is - Retribution!

Tey's real name was Elizabeth MacKintosh; she was born in the Highlands of Scotland. She spent some years in a physical training college in Birmingham and then worked as an instructress in hospitals and schools in various parts of England. She obtained fame as a playwright (RICHARD OF BORDEAUX, MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS) under the name of Gordon Daviot. She died in 1922, cutting short a brilliant writing career.

Like Allingham, Tey has a permanent stable of characters; but we do not have the same opportunity to watch them develop. Inspector Grant figures in most of her detective stories. As soon as I mention Grant, I have to admit that there is quite a trace of the snob in Tey. I could perhaps better excuse this if I knew how old she was when she died; for her assumptions are vastly different than that of today. Tey firmly believed that one could tell a "lady" just by looking at her shoes. One of the main points she makes about Grant is that he doesn't look like a policeman. He is a "gentleman" and this, she asserts, is a great asset in his work. His 'Watson' is Sgt. Williams, the plodder who hero-worships Grant. Lastly, there is Marta Hallard, a leading stage artist who gravitates between the Haymarket and the Old Vic. Grant has appeared in her life over a matter of stolen jewellery and it suited them both for him to escort her on occasions. Marta did not find it easy to get escorts, men were a little afraid of her. It suited Grant also; "the more windows on the world a policeman has the better he is likely to be at his job, and Marta was Grant's 'Leper's squint' on the theatre"

This is her cast of permanent characters; yet the first book by Tey that I read held none of them. This was MISS PYM DISPOSES. I was very impressed after reading it. Miss Pym is a visiting lecturer at a physical training college. Tey undoubtedly used her knowledge of such a place to

## Nibblings 2

to good advantage. Miss Pym is, at first, admiring of the senior girls she meets in this school, so full of life and high energy. She admires their ability to work hard from the first bell at 5.30am till 8.0pm at night; and then study hard for their exams. They go, with never a halt, from physical exercises to massage clinics to lectures on the structure of the artery. As a writer of a book on psychology she feels that they are as nice and normal a bunch as one could meet. Then she meets "The Nut Tart", the girl from Brazil come to study dancing and "get a bit of English discipline". The Nut Tart says: "I remind you that it is their last term this. And so everything is e-normously exaggerated. Everyone is just a little bit insane. If a student is frightened by nature, then she is a thousand times more frightened this term. If she is ambitious, then her ambitions become a passion. And so on. It is not a normal life they lead. You cannot expect them to be normal". Of all Tey's characters the Nut Tart (Brazil, you see, and un-English dresses) is one of the most delightful. She explains why she is taking anatomy. "It is a subject that does not get out of date. Now your subject, if you will forgive me Miss Pym, is continually getting out of date, no? To listen to it is charming, but to work at it would be foolish. An idea today may be nonsense tomorrow, but a clavicle is a clavicle for all time."

The school soon becomes real to the reader; the senior girls become intriguing individuals. One begins to appreciate the strain they live under; and there is the final strain of waiting to see what job materialises for each of them. So: then comes the magic word "Arlinghurst" the girl's school, a plum of a job. Everyone assumes that Innes will be the one chosen to go there. When the headmistress chooses Rouse instead, a sense of wrong is felt by all. Tey has a very good psychological reason to explain this choice. Then comes the death of Rouse; seemingly by accident. But there is circumstantial evidence, known only to Miss Pym which points to Innes being the cause.

And how does Miss Pym dispose? "If God did dispose" thought Miss Pym, "as undoubtedly He did in the latter end--then perhaps the disposing was already at work. Had begun to work when it was she and not someone else who had found the little rosette. It had not been found by a strong-minded person who would go straight to Henrietta with it as soon as she smelt a rat, and so set the machinery of man-made Law in motion. No, it had been found by a feeble waverer like herself, who could never see less than three sides to any question". And so Miss Pym disposes; in return for her silence Innes gives up Arlinghurst and pledges her life to medical work in the market town she had hoped to leave behind. And that's that! But is it? Almost on the last page Miss Pym discovers that the rosette belongs to Beau, who is Innes' best friend. "How soon?" wondered Miss Pym, "had Innes begun to suspect? Poor Innes, who was paying forfeit". And there we are left, no compromise, no happy ending; the bright star Innes paying forfeit. It is a story to haunt you.

I feel, in a way, that Tey believes more in retribution than in cool detective work. Even Grant deduces more by his "flair" about people than by anything else. "BRAT FARRAR" also deals with retribution. This story is another twist on the lost or stolen child theme. Brat is a foundling approached by unscrupulous Alec who is fascinated by Brat's resemblance

### Nibblings 3

to Simon who is heir to a comfortable inheritance. Alec proposes that Brat impersonate Patrick, the elder twin of Simon who vanished when he was 12 years old. Brat becomes Retribution itself as the story unfolds to show that Simon had in fact murdered his brother.

The theme of retribution is implicit in most of her stories; the most satisfying one is "THE FRANCHISE AFFAIR". In this an elderly widow and her daughter are accused of kidnapping and ill-treating an innocent young girl with a "face like Bernadette". The two women are scarified by the Press and public; they can produce no evidence to prove the girl's story wrong. The lawyer who befriends the women develops a strong desire to see retribution dealt out to the girl. Not, however, in the ordinary way of violence. He wants to see her publically unmasked as a liar. This happens in a way that leaves the reader very happily gratified.

Then there is "TO LOVE AND BE WISE, a truly odd book which will re-pay re-reading after you have solved the puzzle. About half-way through this book you become very provoked at the authoress. Here she has introduced you to this charming young man Leslie; and in Chapter 7 he disappears for good, with the strong assumption that he has been murdered. Yet the whole book concerns the puzzle of Leslie--a beautiful young man, an attractive young man, an intriguing and magnetic young man. He whirls everyone into his orbit, including the reader. When he vanishes you read on with a sense of injury at such a thing. As some of you may yet read this book, I will not spoil it by revealing the ending; but I can assure you that your sense of being cheated may even last till the end of the book! After that, if you re-read it, you will become reconciled. You will then notice that Tey is handing our heavy dollops of hints as to the solution of the puzzle. She is always fair with her readers.

In this book Tey once again disdains evidence and invokes Grant's "flair". He announces to his chief that the case just doesn't smell right. His chief remembers "That years ago Grant had gone into the farthest Highlands after a man and brought him back; brought him back sewn up in a case so fault-proof that only the sentence remained to be said; and had handed him over with the remarks that on the whole he thought they had got the wrong man. They had." This refers to "THE MAN IN THE QUEUE" in which Tey has the audacity to have the crime solved only by the confession of the killer.

One of the things Tey shares with Allingham, is her sure touch with minor characters. A good example is the first person we meet in "A SHILLING FOR CANDLES", William Potticary. He is only there to find the body, but he is fashioned with loving care. And here comes Suspect No 1.... "His thin dark figure shot from the mouth of the Gap and came towards them at a shambling run, giving the small group watching an impression of craziness. He stumbled into the compact circle. "Oh yes, it is! Oh, it is!" he cried, and without warning sat down and burst into tears. Six flabbergasted men watched him in silence for a moment. Then the sergeant patted him kindly on the back and said, idiotically: "It's alright, son!" But the young man only rocked himself to and fro and wept the more. "Come on, come on" rallied the constable, coaxing. (Really, a dreadful exhibition on a nice bright morning). "That won't

#### Nibblings 4

do anyone any good, you know. Best pull yourself together--sir," he added noting the quality of the handkerchief which the young man produced."

Notice the small snobbism? Yet with this goes such a shrewd reading of human frailties. Here is a snatch from "THE SINGING SANDS" to illustrate this. "Grant hesitated; analysing, as always, just exactly what he did feel. "I find vanity repellant. As a person I loathe it, and as a policeman I distrust it" "It's a harmless sort of weakness", Tad said with a tolerant lift of the shoulder. "That is just where you are wrong. it is the utterly destructive quality. When you say vanity, you are thinking of the kind that admires itself in mirrors and buys things to deck itself out in. But that is merely conceit. Real vanity is something different. A matter not of person but of personality. Vanity says 'I must have this because I am me.' It is a frightening thing because it is incurable. You can never convince Vanity that anyone else is of the slightest importance; he just doesn't understand what you are talking about. He will kill a person rather than be put to the inconvenience of doing a six month stretch".

I am fascinated by the glimpses one gets of Tey through the opinions of her characters. One wonders what her story was: born in the Highlands - it's a far cry to a college in Birmingham. Her feelings about Scotland are trenchant and by no means very flattering. In fact only a Scot could so thoroughly deglamorise the Highlands as she does in "THE SINGING SANDS", and I gather that her opinion of Glasgow and Glaswegians would not be printable. Her description of a hotel in the Hebrides, where Grant hoping for home-made scones found that store-bought cakes were considered finer, rings with the truth of experience. Reading it I was reminded of a visit to Arran. The dining-room of the hotel there was full of flies and I can remember thinking indignantly..had they never heard of DDT?

As for romantiscising the Gael! Listen to this passage...."Why this sudden interest in the Islands?" Laura asked. "It seems that Tir nan Og is just one jump west from the singing sands" answered Grant. "So is America", said Laura. "Which is much nearer the Islander's ideas of Heaven than Tir nan Og is". Grant said that the Gaels were the only race who visualised Heaven as a country of the young; which was endearing of them. "They are the only known race who have no word for no," said Laura drily. "That is a much more revealing characteristic than their notions of eternity".

Dry hits at the Scots parades through all her books; for a woman who was born in Scotland, she sure thinks a heap of the English...."Mr Mac allan looked down on the Southern English walking about in their southern English sunshine, and metaphorically spat. "They're so satisfied with themselves I can't take my eyes off them. I look at them and think: 'These people kept Scotland fighting for four hundred years', and I can't find the answer". "The answer", replied Grant, "is that they didn't, they've been much too busy for the last thousand years keeping the shores of England. But for them Scotland would be a part of Spain today".

I have two theories to account for this. She might just have taken an

## Nibblings 5

old-fashioned scunner at Scotland; and that would probably be caused by someone Scottish. Some thrawn old relative perhaps? Do you remember a film called THE HASTY HEART? In this there was an American who hated all things Scottish, because of a Scottish Grandfather. He said: "God and my Grandfather were always right; God might make a mistake now and then but my Grandfather never!" How I laughed when I heard that! My other theory is that she just fell in love with England (it happens) or at least the idea of it.

She certainly had a love of English history; and must be the only detective story writer who had her detective puzzle out the historical mystery of the Princes in the Tower and prove that Richard III was not guilty after all. This book is called DAUGHTER OF TIME. It is a delight to either the detective story or historical story buffs.

From it I pick out one last example of her dry wit and ability to paint with words.

"But of course in the days of the Roses, France was still a semi-detached part of England; a country much less foreign to an Englishman than Ireland was. A fifteenth-century Englishman went to France as a matter of course; but to Ireland under protest. Grant lay and thought about that England. The England over which the War of the Roses had been fought. But it had been more of a blood feud than a war. A Montague and Capulet affair; of no great concern to the average Englishman. No one pushed in at your door to demand whether you were York or Lancaster and to hale you off to a concentration camp if your answer proved to be the wrong one for the occasion. It was a small concentrated war; almost a private party. They fought a battle in your lower meadow, and turned your kitchen into a dressing-station, and then moved off somewhere or other to fight a battle somewhere else, and a few weeks later you would hear what had happened at the battle and you would have a family row about the result because your wife was probably Lancaster and you were perhaps York, and it was all rather like following rival football teams. No one persecuted you for being Lancastrian or Yorkist, any more than you would be persecuted for being an Arsenal fan or a Chelsea follower. Grant was still thinking of that green England when he fell asleep"

Ethel Lindsay

Paperback editions of Josephine Tey:-

Pan Books: Miss Fym Disposes

Brat Farrar

To Love and Be Wise

A Shilling for Candles

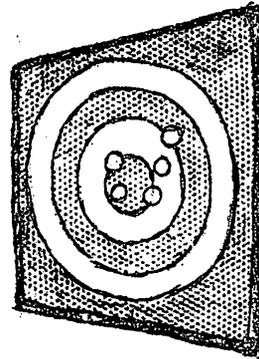
The Man in the Queue

The Franchise Affair

The Singing Sands

Penguin Books: The Daughter of Time

MACHIAVARLEY



In an effort to get MachiaVarley away from his gardening and sitting down at his typer the editress sent him the following:

THERE WAS A YOUNG MAN UP IN LEEDS  
WELL KNOWN FOR HIS GOOD WRITING DEEDS  
BUT OF HIS OVERDUE ARTICLE  
I'VE HAD NOT A PARTICLE  
HE MUST LOVE ME LESS THAN HIS WEEDS.

The reply soon came.....

"A" by MachiaVarley.

Above, dear Ethel is an article as you requested. Sorry it's somewhat indefinite but it's the only one I could find at the time.

Hang on! I've found another a little more positive, not to say completely definite.

Yer tiz

"THE"

(also by MachiaVarley)

There you are two "captital" articles in one go-you lucky girl.  
love Brian.

The editress said admiringly--"The Devil! I'll kill him!" and then decided to fill up his column with his ever-loving wife's letter.....

Dear Ethel,

I'll bot you get letters from people all wanting to talk about

## MachiaVarley 2

their reading matter and who am I to set myself up as an exception? Well I have been browsing through the ten volumes of Arthur Mee's Childrens' Encyclopedia and finding it fascinating in a repulsive sort of way and at times so unintentionally funny that I laughed out loud.

They were bought for Brian..the volumes were completed a few months after the start of World War two, but reading it now, it seems almost impossible that it is only one generation away from 1966. The last article in Vol.10 is entitled "Europe Today" and Mee sums up the positions of the nations thus:- "America revised her Neutrality laws so that her manufacturers could supply the Allies with arms, and it was reckoned that 95% of her people prayed for an Allied victory. Turkey brought immense power and hope to the side of the allies by joining the democracies, in spite of immense temptation to oppose them. 'Turkey keeps her word" said her Prime Minister. Spain grew more and more disgusted with the German-Russian alliance, and when Russia, a nation of 180, millions attacked the gallant little people of Finland, the whole civilised world looked on with shame and loathing. Finland sought the help of the League of Nations, but except for sympathy there was little chance of aiding her, for all the Allies were engaged in a life and death struggle with the Enemy of the World, and it was impossible to divert their armies from the the central purpose they had set before them; their axe was at the main trunk of the tree, and they dare not turn aside to trim the branches".

The books are all written down to children, no matter what the subject, Mee manages to finish with a little sermon - about how we must always do our duty, serve our country and its glorious Empire, fear God, but not too much because he is naturally on the side of England. There are about 40 contributors listed, but the character of the editor comes through most strongly in these jingoistic, priggish little homilies. Sex is strictly abjured - even the science articles which explain things such as "Why we look like our parents" goes on about 'seeds' and etc, but never mentions how they are germinated, it is fascinating to see how 7,382 pages filled with the history, literature, philosophy and etc of mankind can avoid even a remote hint of sex, but it does. When I came to the story of Oedipus, I thought -Ha! Ha! - now how is he going to get around this one? Well it was dead simple. Oedipus' mother was never mentioned, the story of how he killed his father is told, and goes on to say he is made King of Thebes - the next sentence is, and I quote "He married and had a daughter called Antigone and two sons called Polynices and Eteodes". I wouldn't mind so much but everywhere else in the book, he goes on and on about the beauty of mother-love. Whilst I have the book open at the story of Oedipus I must quote the little end-piece - it will show you exactly what I mean:-

"The tragedy of Oedipus has often made men ask:Why should he have been so heavily punished for a crime committed in ignorance? But the story is founded on an unshakable law of Nature. Wrong doing always brings suffering. A man who leads a drunken life ruins his health, and his innocent children are often stricken with blindness, insanity, or lesser illnesses. This is not punishment by Heaven, it is simply a law of nature, like the law of gravity, which makes a dropped thing fall to the ground.

MachiaVarley 3

The story of Oedipus, the parricide, means: If you put your hand in the fire it will burn, and if you are blindfolded when you do it, still it will burn."

So remember, next time you are tempted to drink, think of Oedipus, and all the blind, mad kids you might have.

There is one piece on "The Lives of the Painters" and the 'lives' are what he concentrates on, not a word about their art, in fact he gets quite upset about this when he is writing about Titian:- "Most of his biographers have been so busy explaining Titian's greatness in art they have forgotten the little human touches that change a genius into a man".

Tut! Tut!

However, in all fairness, I must say that I have learnt a lot from these encyclopedias, there are plenty of illustrations, maps, lists of every town in every county in England, every river and waterway and the whole thing is well referenced. I've found simple explanations of all sorts of things in them, tho' the other day I wanted to look up something about the suffragette movement and it isn't even mentioned! I might have known!

\*\*\*\*\*Frances and Brian Varley.\*\*\*\*\*

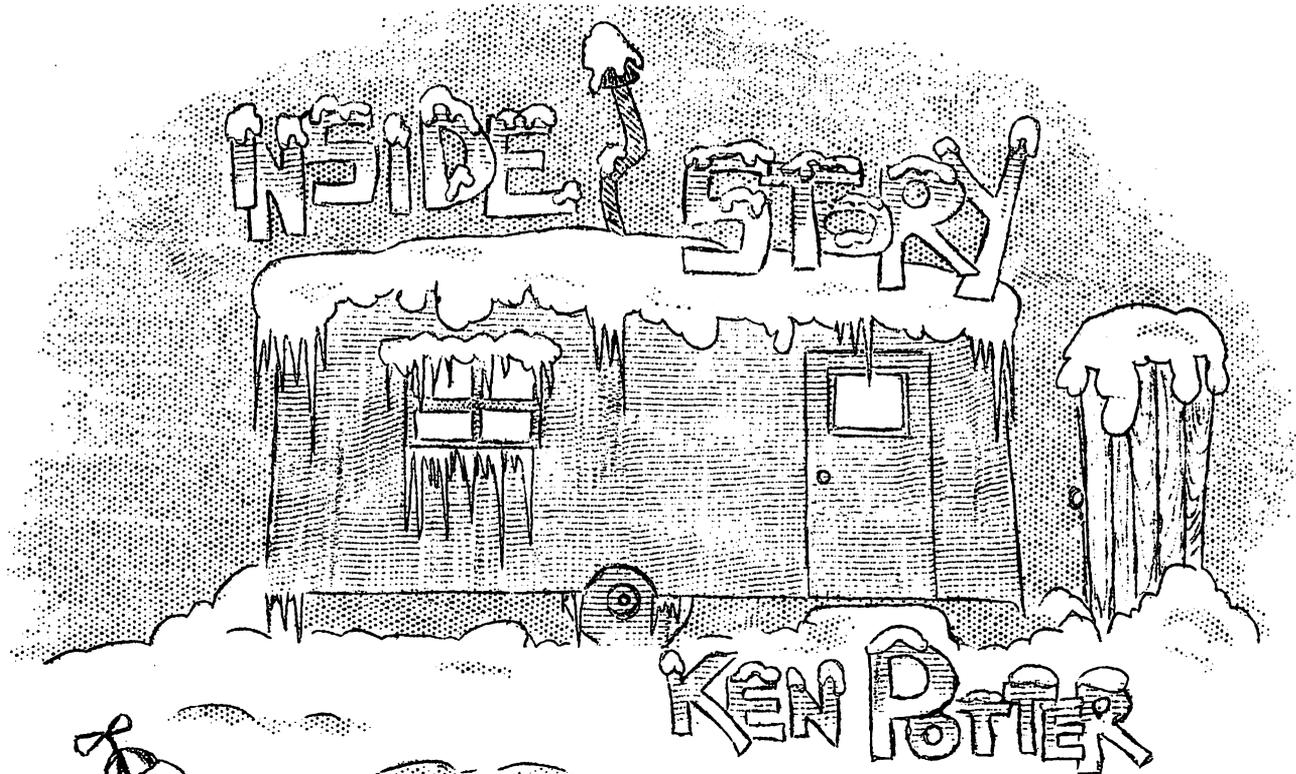
PASTELL the Art Show Magazine...the latest issue is still available from British Agent, Ethel Lindsay. The price is five for 7/6d or \$1.

Back copies are also available of this very interesting magazine. It is aimed at all artists, all fanzine editors, and all fans interested in artwork.

It contains news of the Art Shows, lists of award winners, and has many other articles of information. A typical one is -"Adding more colour to your fanzine" by Art Rapp. This is a follow-up from a previous article by Ted White on the way to add colour to your fanzine.

American readers write to:- Bjo Trimble  
12002 Lorna St  
Garden Grove  
California.92641.

European readers write to Ethel Lindsay.



When Irene and I decided to embrace the life of rural simplicity known as caravan dwelling, many friends and acquaintances, some of them fans, wanted to know what it was like. If they didn't really want to know, and merely asked out of politeness, they had better not read this, for I am egotist enough for my most fluent subject of writing to be myself. What with deadlines, and trying to write plays and things, I propose, instead of creating a mad fan extravaganza, or an essay of real depth, to tell them.

The van itself is an ungainly and rickety contrivance of aluminium, consisting almost entirely of cupboards, beds, and shelves which now contain about forty thousand books, or maybe slightly fewer. The manufacturers have cleverly arranged to find space for a tiny sink, having the capacity of a fairly large jam jar, and two or three square feet of floorspace. Whether it is raining or not, water cascades incessantly down the inside of the walls and windows.

The night we moved in, it was raining. We felt that we had never truly heard the rain before. I woke in the night firmly convinced that a company of infantry was square-bashing on the roof. It was with surprise and considerable relief that we discovered in the morning that we still had a roof, and only three or four gallons of water had managed to infiltrate. It was a hard initiation, but our

neighbours seemed healthy enough, and some of them were making do with what appeared to be not caravans, but converted sardine cans. We eventually settled in. The rain is not so terrifying now, perhaps because of the number of other things we have to contend with. In summer, it is almost perfect, providing one remembers to live outside, and use the van as a library. It is during the winter months that man's old battle with the elements is dramatically re-enacted.

Outside, the world is white, whether with light snow or heavy frost, it is impossible to tell. Two exhausted figures huddle together on the knobby bed, with its mattress of now sunken springs, which have been beaten over the months into such submission that they will never rise again. The bed occupies almost all the space, the remaining fragment being taken by a collapsible cot housing a very much smaller figure. It is Karen, and the other two are Irene and I. It is six o'clock in the morning, and we all breathe deeply in the blissful ignorance of sleep. Inside, as well as out, the silence is broken only by an occasional icicle forming from the water vapour in the air, and clattering to the floor.

Suddenly, the new morning is rent by a hideous shriek. Karen is awake, and as a consequence, so are we. As she screeches on implacably, we groan in reply, trying to ignore her. But she always wins, and I fight my way out of the arms of Morpheus, and sniff the cold air. The sun is rising. I grope instinctively at the pile of clothes on top of the record player, and unearth the clock. It has stopped. More groping reveals the radio. No sound can be coaxed from it, the batteries are flat. I sniff the pungently freezing air; it is laden with paraffin. There wasn't enough in the heater, which has therefore gone out, after burning its wick completely away. Karen howls on. With the courage born of despair I hurl myself out of bed, and trying to forget that I am hardly clad, I savagely ram Karen's bottle of anti-freeze into her eager mouth. I stand quaking with cold, and as I think what to do next, I glare with venomous jealousy at my wife, who is curled and purring softly in the dry half of the bed.

A decision must be made instantly, before my blood is solid. There are only two reasonable alternatives - I must either dress or get some source of warmth to function. The strain is considerable, but I do the only thing possible. I get back into bed.

It seems only three minutes later when I am summoned by shrieking again, and I hopelessly twiddle the knob on the radio. By some incredible miracle, a voice informs me that it is 7.55 am, before silence descends once more. With my bare legs scaly with gooseflesh, I hope about in the tiny sub-zero kitchen, seeking a box of matches. The first eight or nine boxes I find in odd corners, such as down the back of the gas stove, are empty, but eventually I step on a box which is on the floor, and rapturously discover that there are three live matches in it. Then I root about for paraffin, and find to my surprise that it is not frozen solid. I put a couple of pints in the heater, and three pints on the floor. With my last match, I contrive to light the few remaining shreds of wick. Karen howls on.

It must be past eight o'clock by now, and I have to catch the 8.15 train, allowing five minutes to sprint to the station. But it is not as easy as that. It is essential that I first force Irene to rise, so that I may replace the bed in its niche in the wall. With one hand, I tip water out of a large plastic container into the kettle, and light the gas under it. With the other, I savagely tear blankets from the bed, screaming: "Get up. Get up! It's late. It's late!" With monumental reluctance, Irene oozes out of bed. Then I realise that it is Saturday, and there is no train to catch. Karen howls on.

In little more than three hours, everything is organised. It has been hell, but now Karen is asleep again. Until three minutes ago, she has not only been screaming, but also throwing wooden bricks at the windows, and gnawing savagely at the wardrobe door. But now all is peace. The temperature has been raised to a little above

zero. True, the floor is knee-deep in one-eyed bunnies, and plastic ducks, but we are comfortable in our humble way. We look forward to an idyllic weekend of cowering round the fire, and whimpering. We anticipate that this will be broken only by the trifling interruptions caused by eating, washing things, and tending Kaern. All these things combined shouldn't take more than thirty or forty hours.

But fate has some more brutal cuffs up its sleeve. Cat and mouse fashion, it gives us a little respite, and it is not until after dinner that we discover that the plug is missing. The plug is a very tiny disc of white rubber, and there are many millions of places it could have dropped or rolled into. My more perceptive readers may be wondering why it is not on a chain. It was not supplied thus, but there is a better reason. I have calculated that the thinnest chain obtainable would displace more water than the sink holds. By the time we have ascertained that the plug is in none of the likely or unlikely places, night has fallen. Our marathon search has been periodically interrupted by Karen, who has demanded attention by launching herself at our legs in a very professional Rugby tackle, emitting a wild battle cry as she does so.

Now another fruitless day is wearily dragging itself to the grave, and we still haven't found the plug. We have, however, managed to unearth a sufficiently small cork, and this will have to do.

The washing up from two meals towers to the ceiling (which is at least five feet from the floor). Karen has lapsed into unconsciousness again, we hope for the night. We grit out teeth and put the cork in the sink. I will wash and Irene will dry. With luck, it will be over by midnight. I put the kettle on and wait for it to boil, while we cower round the fire once more.

Unsuspected reserves of endurance are building up in my weary body as I cower. Then the lights go dim. The go off, and so does the light under the kettle, in which the water is just warm enough to be in the liquid state. The gas cylinder is empty.

We are not beaten. It was with just such an emergency in mind that we held in reserve a full replacement cylinder. Planning, you see. All we have to do is switch over. We keep a spanner for this very purpose, but it was lent three months ago to a neighbour who is now out. The first step, therefore, is to borrow one from somebody else. This involves tramping round the site for a very long time, knocking on countless doors. But eventually, somebody, after an hour's diligent searching, comes up with a big rusty spanner which is very nearly the correct size.

All I have to do now is fight my way through the snowdrifts which have been piling up all day (unnoticed by us because of preoccupation with plug-searching) to the gas cylinders, move a couple of tons of snow out of the way, unscrew the pipe from the empty cylinder, and screw it onto the full one. All this is comparatively easy, except the final step. I can't possibly see what I'm doing, and the only thing feasible is to apply the nut to the thread, and turn until it engages. It does not engage, however. After an inconceivable total of minutes, each of six hundred seconds, I am not only frozen, I have not only exhausted my obscene vocabulary several times over, but also I am beginning to doubt that I am turning in the right direction. I checked this very carefully before I started. I know it is right, but nevertheless I am beginning to doubt, and that way lies madness and death.

Just as I am about to give way to an incoherent screech which means that I am licked, and we'll bloody well leave the washing up and sit in the dark, brooding over our misfortunes and anticipating raw bacon and eggs for breakfast, just as my hold on sanity has been stretched to its uttermost limits - the thread engages. I tighten it with the spanner, which keeps slipping because it's a fraction too big, but eventually it's done. It is all over!

Now we can have the unbelievable happiness of washing up. But Irene, doing what she could to help in the dark, had succeeded in blocking up the sink with the fragments of the cork we were using as a plug. All it needs, she assures me bravely through her tears, is a bit of ingenuity and hard work. After all, we have light now. The light flickers and dies - we have sprung a leak.

This is the final blow, I have taken too much. As Karen suddenly starts screeching again, I begin to giggle wildly. Tearing off my clothes as I go, I rush crazily into the snowy night, barefoot, over the railway, into the fields. My lungs are bursting to produce a hideous, ear-splitting gurgle. On through the snow I stumble, wearing only a tattered vest, and I am never seen again.

Otherwise, caravan life is fine.

Ken Potter.

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#### REVIEW

Doubleday & Co. Three pocketbooks by Donald A. Wollheim

Mike Mars Astronaut  
Mike Mars Flies the X 15  
Mike Mars at Cape Kennedy

These are all published by Doubleday & Co The Pocket Book Library at 45p. There are others to follow in this series. They have already been published in hardback; but only in America. I know they have proved very popular with boys; it's odd that I have never heard them mentioned in a fanzine.

They are, of course, juveniles and aimed at the age group of boys who like to know all the technical details. Don has done a lot of research for these books; he gives the training programme for astronauts very thoroughly. One knows that these men must have a very taxing physical examination to endure but, till I read these books I really did not know just how arduous it was.

Through the series so far runs a tale of conflict with a nasty type who is trying to do Mike Mars an injury. I guess this is why fans have not mentioned these books much, the characters are very black and white. The age group these stories are being aimed at, however, liked to have things that way. These are adventure stories with a strong factual content; meant for boys who are dreaming of becoming astronauts one day. Just the thing for your Xmas shopping list if you have a nephew or two.  
Ethel Lindsay.

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OF ALL THE MANY REMEDIES THAT WONT CURE A COLD, WHISKY IS BY FAR THE MOST POPULAR.



Archie Mercer  
 First Floor Flat  
 Rosehill  
 2 Cotham Park South  
 Bristol.6

"House names - well, as you can see by the address above, this select establishment calls itself "Rosehill". It is in fact at the top of a hill (most of Bristol is either at the top, or at the bottom, or half-way up a hill) but roses aren't particularly

prominent in the landscape. However, the precise name chosen isn't so significant as is the fact that it is used at all. (The name not the house) The wrought-iron gate is labelled with the relevant particulars pertaining to the property as a whole, to wit: "Rosehill - 2 Cotham Park South". Inscribed deeply into the stone gate-post, however, is the number "17". And the latest Bristol telephone directory lists the landlord's number (he lives downstairs) as "17 Cotham Park". Apparently what is now Cotham Park South used at one time to count postally as Cotham Park plain-and-simple, although it shoots off from the middle of it. Hence this house was originally No 17 Cotham Park. Then somebody in the Post Office had second thoughts (which however never percolated as far as the telephone dept.) and declared it independent. In the confused circumstances, the existence of a house-name over and above the rival serial numbers and/or road-names does convey a certain feeling of security. Too, I have a "thing" about names. Once bestowed, I feel, a name should not be subject to whimsical alteration. Thus my original caravan, being named "Cosy Cote" when I bought it, stayed "Cosy Cote" (not openly though!) until it ceased to belong to me... The core of "The Potter Oddment" - the narrative

Letters 2

of Fred's adventures piloting the Windermere boat - I find indeed to be most excellently funny. It'd be better at somewhat greater length though. What helps to spoil the effect is the obscure introduction. I have read a few Allingham books from time to time..the last one..was "Tiger in the Smoke", shortly after it had been released as a film. I read the book largely in an effort to understand what the film had been about and found it considerably more explicit as to motivations etc, but both annoyed me because that street bands were made the villains. To my mind, they should have been the heroes. I like such street bands. As you may have realised by now, I'm one of these people who maintain that every name, even more so than an ordinary word, should be spelled correctly. You don't object to "Lindsey" you say. What about "Linsey" though, or perhaps "Lincy"? Or even "Linzi"? Or "Lyntsie".....

\*\*\*\*Nope, I don't object to any of them. Some looked rather nice, I thought particularly "Lincy".\*\*\*\*

Irene Potter  
4 Hartington St.  
Lancaster.

"I think Irene Potter's article in SCOTTISHE is dreadful -Luv Irene Potter.

It is too, but one day I was feeling so lousy that I simply had to do something -so I thought

"Oh" - just like that "Oh, I'll write something dreadful and send it to Ethel"...Re MachiaVarley. When we had a caravan we named it THE SNARK because it was difficult to find. We now live in a terraced house - so we're not in the naming game, but Ken had thought of purchasing a ship's bell from an advert in Exchange and Mart to hang outside the door. However something has turned us against it."

\*\*\*\*Next time you write something, dreadful or not, be sure and send it to me. Archie is not the only fan with queer likes. He likes street-bands. I like Potters.\*\*\*\*

Arthur Hayes  
PO Box 189  
Matachewan  
Ontario.Canada

"The main thing about Haverings that I like is that it is not, and this you also claim, a truly review-zine, but an opinion zine, your opinion, on the zines you received. To me, such an opinion is worth more than strictly review zines

that try to avoid being biased, that tries to be impartial and rarely succeeds other than in boring the readers. Your comments while the reader may not agree with the opinions expressed, is more honest, and so, can be read with enjoyment, since there is no confusion by the reader as to whether he should take your opinion as god's truth, or the opinion of a good, experienced fan. What more can one really want anyway?"

\*\*\*\*A letter column in Haverings would be just another stick for my back, so I publish this letter here. Can there be such a thing as an impartial review? \*\*\*\*

Sid Birchby  
40 Parris Wood  
Didsbury  
Manchester 20

"I was amused by the latest instalment of 'Natterings', and by your description of how you found yourself in Edinburgh with the wind whistling down Princes Street. At various times during the war, the Army posted me to sundry prisoner-of-war camps, mostly in the lowlands and highlands of Scotland, and the main centre of civilisation for the odd day off was Edinburgh. Consequently I seemed to be continually walking down Princes St looking for a station, a bus, or maybe

### Letters 3

just a square meal. And, yes, the wind certainly did whistle. Before you begin to wonder why I was constantly being shuffled from one prisoner-of-war camp to another, I must deny that I was (a) a dangerous alien (b) unable to pay my mess bills (c) Rudolf Hess. I was at this time on the War Office audit staff and whenever a camp got into financial difficulties (to put it nicely) I was one of those sent out to put things (ha-ha!) right, or at least less wrong. Let me tell you, I was the terror of the adjutants, the scourge of camp commandants, and the veritable flail of the Lord (War Lord) from Galashiels to Strathpeffer. When they heard that I was coming, they really trembled. You'd have thought Batman was on the way. A funny thing about that. When I was looking for a job after the war, one of the men I was interviewed by was an old acquaintance whom I had last seen under very different circumstances at one of the camps. (In irons! Screaming for mercy! His lance-corporal's stripes ripped off in disgrace!) But he didn't bear any malice when I met him again. All part of the war, he said. Things were different now. Yes, he could find me a job. As a matter of fact, he actually did."

\*\*\*\*We must have been wandering Princes St about the same time. I used to meet so many servicemen too..I can remember my cousin and I going out with one lot and going home with another..ah weel..these were the days!\*\*\*\*

Harry Warner  
423 Summit Ave.  
Hagerstown  
Maryland.

"You are so right about the obsession with names that engulfs so many fans. One of my earliest fannish memories is getting a rebuke from Louis Russell Chauvenet because I'd started a letter to him with: "Dear Louis". He told me, "I'm Louis only to acquaintances, and

Russell to you." and I was so unhappy at this faux pas that I never did ask if this meant that the right to call him Russell implied that you were a real friend of his or simply a complete non-entity to him. I don't think that I've been too fussy about my own name. I rarely use in fandom my middle initial, B, but that is simply a habit acquired for a good reason: during my father's lifetime, he always used his middle initial and if I avoided it, there was less confusion about the proper recipient of a letter that arrived without the identifying Sr. or Jr. One thing that makes me somewhat unhappy is my lifelong inability to acquire a nickname. What attention I give to my name is usually caused by practical considerations. I had my birth certificate changed a few years back, when I discovered that the middlename was wrong, because of the danger that this might cause legal complications for either me or my heirs some day. I continue to use the Jr. after my father's death because Jr. is on my signature and all documents that were prepared during his lifetime and dropping it would cause confusion or worse in years to come"

\*\*\*\*For some time I've been curious as to why you continued to use the Jr. Probably others too (we are a curious lot) so now we are all satisfied\*\*\*\*

Felice Rolfe  
1360 Emerson  
Balo Alto  
Calif. 94301

"...I recently read Ed Mesky's copy of your TAFF report. I'm not much for reading fannish history (defined as anything that happened more than a year ago), but I started browsing through it and was caught and read to the end. It was entertaining, but more than that -- in several places you brought through very well the essential shyness that all of us feel, one time or another, and none of us seem to

## Letters 4

recognise in other people..It seemed to me important.....My use of the word "liberal" has been commented upon. I should have been more clear. "Liberal" is not my word for the extremists on the Left; it's what they call themselves. To my mind, an extremist in either direction is pretty obnoxious...and I couldn't care less what he calls himself. But in order to make a start at talking to them, you have to use the label they've attached to themselves; and I guess it's gotten to be a habit...No I'm not conservative or Right or even very square. I'm in sympathy with many of the goals of these people who call themselves "liberals"; I can even see giving them the freedom to write a "dirty word" on a sign and wave it around if they want to, though it seems a rather silly activity for a grown man(you've heard about the Free Speech controversy at the University of California at Berkeley?). I grew up in the South and am strongly in favor of integration(though even more in favor of having integration be such an accepted thing that no one thinks about it). I even rather like long hair on boys. What all this proves I cannot say-- all I mean is that no matter what my views are, when someone starts getting dogmatic I'm automatically on the other side. What say I wind this up before digging myself in deeper?"

\*\*\*\*First thanks for the kind words on THE LINDSAY REPORT. It's nice that even this time after a few remarks like this still come my way.I'm not quoting it only to be big-headed ..but as a come-on to others..still some copies left and the proceeds still go to TAFF. By your description of yourself, I'd call you a "l'beral" person by my standards. You are certainly not what I'd call a "conservative". Now if we can't rescue the word "liberal" from the extreme Left where the US is determined it shall stay..what do we use to label a person like yourself? How can I discuss politics with my American friends when our very labels are different?\*\*\*\*

Rick Sneary  
2962 Santa Ana St  
South Gate  
Calif

"The history of Scotland was also very good. It filled in a number of holes in my understanding, and explains to some degree the resentment of the English. Though it doesn't explain why the Scots and English still act that way...Keeping the costumes of ones ancestors is of course a good thing. Last month we held the annual Scots Games and Dances. This month the Japanese have their week, and Santa Barbara will hold one of the best of many Old Spanish Days celebrations. By the way, I was interested in the history to read that the Lindsays were English, brought into Scotland to take over lands that other English leaders had depopulated of natives. As the Lindsays have only been in Scotland a little over 400 years, I will expect you to take a pro-English stand from now on, as befitting national loyalty"

\*\*\*\*Oh! You terrible man! I send you a book of Scottish history and you use it to astound me like this! That's what I get for sending off books without reading them first. Oddly enough my Mother sent a cutting from a paper the same week as your astounding news. It was titled IS YOUR NAME LINDSAY? and gave the following information..."If you are a Lindsay, your ancestry can be traced back hundreds of years to the time of William the Conqueror. The family came over with the Conqueror, settling in the Lothians and Borders. Later they moved to Upper Clydesdale and the clan chief took his title, the Earl of Crawford, from Crawford in that district" It's a terrible choice..English or French..illusions all shattered!\*\*\*\*



## Natterings 2

played mostly Bach to a fairly mixed audience. On the whole he retained his audience much better than the film shows often did. I can remember that the first time I saw Olivier's HENRY V was at one of these shows and the audience left it in droves. Very distracting.

The servicemen were looked after by the Army orderlies, the tubercular patients were looked after by the Quakers, the conscientious objectors, who we called Faus for short. Anyone who has read Mary Renault's book THE CHARIOTEERS will find described there a hospital very similar to Bangour. She describes very well the acrimony that arose at first to these Quakers from the servicemen. At Bangour, however this did not arise, as they were kept apart. I was not impressed with what little I saw of the Service orderlies, they were a coarse lot who disliked the work they had to do.

The Faus really wanted to help their patients. They had been brought up as strict Quakers, and took it quite for granted that they should be conscientious objectors. The older ones were very dedicated and marvellous workers. The two younger ones that I first knew were Ralph and Alan; they were pretty care-free and rather careless. They indulged in a half-joking, half-serious rivalry for my attention. I enjoyed their attentions at first; but fell out with Ralph one day over how to make beds. He annoyed me by saying that I did not have to stick to the strict routine; that I was out of my training school now. I annoyed him by insisting that he do it my way.

It taught me a lesson of course, I could not flirt with these men and then expect them not to try to take advantage of this. As I read my notes I see less and less references to having fun with them; but more and more remarks on how Alan had improved. Alan was much the more malleable of the two. We finished up on night duty together and between us ran our two wards like clockwork. Our patients beds were made every morning, our patients were washed and shaved and sitting up eating their breakfasts when the day staff came on duty. We knew we were on the right track as the patients always moaned when our nights off came round.

One often hears of people complaining about being wakened early in the mornings in hospital, and made to wash when they are only half-asleep. Of course, there is the question of time, time, always hurrying at every nurses' shoulder; but often these complaints could be dispelled by a little thought upon the part of the staff. In every ward there is the ill or elderly patient who wakes early and longs for the first cup of tea, the bed to be made comfortable, the wash that will refresh. Our plan was to start with these patients, we left the ones who were well enough to get out of bed till last. We never switched on all the lights, just a small light over the bed of the patient we were attending. With this procedure we could start at 5am - there were 40 beds in the ward - and go quietly round. At bed-making Alan and I had it down to a fine art; we each knew exactly the next move the other would make. Neither of us liked to chatter as we worked. By 6am we could break off to get the breakfast started cooking. Then back to a few more patients who were starting to stir. By 7.30 we could go round to the remainder with tea, finish off their beds quickly whilst they washed, and by 8am have the breakfasts out.

### Natterings 3

Ralph and Alan eventually left Bangour; they were sent with an Aid Unit to Norway to help build houses that had been blitzed by the Germans. Alan wrote faithfully for quite a while. He sent me diagrams of the houses they were building. They left there eventually in a hurry when Alan got Acute Appendicitis. It was a dramatic exit by fishing boat and plane to the nearest hospital many miles away. The last I heard from him, was well after the War when he had become a Youth Club Leader and was taking a party of boys by small boat across the English Channel.

I was lucky when Alan left; in his place came one of the older Faus - John who really loved his work. Later he went to take his training at a large metal hospital. He was extremely good to his patients and had infinite patience with them. He would tramp for miles to find the then very scarce cigarettes.. He would hunt for fruit and made a deal with a local farmer to get fresh eggs for the ward. Even after he left he came back to visit our favourite patient, Hislop.

Hislop had been a patient in Bangour for a longtime. He had both lungs affected; and had never made any progress with treatment. He began to have what we called haemoptisis. This is a haemorrhage from the lungs, which can be either large or small. A large haemorrhage, when the patient brings up a huge quantity of bright-red blood is a very spectacular thing to see. I can remember Elizabeth's..so sudden..so violent..that the walls were splashed right up to the ceiling on either side of her bed. Yet, oddly enough, these large ones are not nearly so deadly in the long run as the small, quiet, constant smitting up of blood. The latter was the type that afflicted Hislop.

Bright-red blood (it has just been aerated in the lung which is why it is so bright) is a very frightening thing to the majority of people. It is particularly frightening when you are the person coughing it up. All of the patients would cry outloudly for help whenever this happened; and we would rush to reassure them.

But not Hislop. About 2am I would look at my watch and decide it was time to pay another round. I'd go into the ward and there would be Hislop sitting with a bowl in his hand quietly coughing away. I'd run to get some ice for him to suck (this sometimes stopped it) and scold him. "Why didn't you call me?" I'd ask. "Now why should I call you?", he'd reply, "you only stand there looking at me whilst I lie here looking at you!" This was true, of course, but he certainly disconcerted me the first time he said it. I never met anyone who took his coming death so calmly. He had not the slightest illusion - he was too bright for that, and he had figured out just how long he had left. Platitudes died on your lips as you looked at his serene face. He said to me once, that he had faced the fact that he was going to die soon; and that he had decided it would be silly to waste any of the remaining time with vain regrets. That is all true to be sure, but it takes a heck of a lot of courage. I think he was the bravest man I ever met.

Elizabeth, who I mentioned earlier, was a very pretty-looking woman and a great favourite with day Sister Willocks. In fact, Sister had her quite spoiled so that she became very difficult and demanding of attention.

#### Natterings 4

She wanted to have injections; Doctor would not put her on Morphine as this was saved for when it was really needed. So, Elizabeth was given injections of sterile water. She used to sleep soundly all night after this; but would lie resolutely awake if she didn't get them.

When I think of Morphine injections; I think of Matt. I see by the 9th Sept. he was having pain and being given  $\frac{1}{4}$  Morphine nightly. By November he was having a grain 4 hourly. As the time wore on to the third hour before his next injection was due; I used to dread to go into the ward. He never asked or begged; except with his eyes. His eyes followed my every move. For such a small, frail person it took him such a long time to die. At the latter end he was a skeleton, just living on Morphine. This happens which is why we avoided using it if we possible could.

My block was S block, and my first wards were 3&4. I was with them for  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years and they grew to seem like my children. In many ways these patients were children. TB has quite an effect upon the personality; as does prolonged hospitalisation. I started out very light-hearted, the atmosphere seemed so relaxed compared with my training school. On all sides I saw Sisters and Nurses who had boy-friends who were patients or doctors or orderlies. I too joined in and the first passages in my diary chronicle many flirtations. Yet I gradually withdrew from it all. For one thing I found the hospital was a hot-bed of gossip and I like my privacy, and for another thing my set-to with Ralph taught that it is difficult to mix business with pleasure!

More and more the references are to the progress of the various patients until I find myself referring to a new Sister as "a silly thing, I had to tick her off for sky-larking with John". I didn't become a prig - honest! I just found out that I had too serious a job to be anything but Sister Lindsay at work. I could be Ethel when I was away from the hospital, and more and more this was the way my inclination lay. On duty, it was Matt and Hislop to worry about; Jimmie to nag into taking his exercises; the Faus to keep on their toes; the discipline to be maintained without being irksome to the patients. Not too firm, not too slack, it took all my energy, I no longer had any desire to go to the dances.

Off duty was a different matter. I was able to get home quite a lot as the nights off were very generous. There I had the company of my cousin Alison and could go to dances to my heart's content. One time she came to Edinburgh to spend a weekend with me. Dear me, what fun we had as light-hearted a pair as ever danced through Edinburgh. The town was seething with the servicemen. A lot of Canadians were stationed nearby, and we got involved with four different lots of them. One night we went out with one group and came home with another; but how we managed that I do not now recall. We used up a tin of vasaline in an effort to pile our hair up in the latest fashion. I blench at the thought of that now, my hair is greasy enough! We stayed at a Nurses' Hostel (much like the YWCA) because it was cheap. Our entire bill, I recall, was fifteen shillings!

We were given keys if we meant to stay out after 10.30pm. On the last night we got to the door and found to our horror that we had forgotten the key; and it was after midnight. We rang the bell with much trembling,

Natterings 5

got the superindendant out of her bed, and received her unvarnished opinion of "flighty young nurses". Alison giggled herself to sleep at the thought of being a nurse. She worked in an office but we had kept quiet about that. I guess I was lucky with her company. She kept me from being hospitalised myself.

Sister Willocks was very typical of many of the older sisters. She had never had any interest beyond her wards. Listening to her avid gossip was what first put me off the idea of being in a position to be talked about like that. Even a piece of harmless chit-chat became something horrendous in her eyes. She became queerer and queerer and in the end had a nervous breakdown. One of her oddities was a perpetual thorn in the side of the Matron. Sister had a cat, a large female who only finished having one litter of kittens to start another. This cat always picked a shelf in the linen-room for her confinements. This was bad enough, but Sister wanted the kittens to stay there! At first this was not too bad, but as they grew more lively to open the linen room was to face a riot of kittens. Naturally everyone took a dim view of this; but Sister guarded them with zeal. When the Power-that-be at last took steps and removed a litter of kittens whilst Sister was away --she became hysterical with rage. This, in fact, was the initial cause of her breakdown. I took it all as a solemn warning.

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When I sent off that rhyme to MachiaVarley, I sent one also to Walt Willis..but no reply! I've run out of ideas of how to coax the next instalment out of him. Any suggestions?

The piece that is written here by Ken Potter has quite a history. It was originally written to be part of a SFCoL Combozine . It actually got as far as being on stencil with the ATOM heading..and then the whole idea of another Combozine fell through. The SFCoL have often talked of reviving the Combozine; but noone wanted to be the editor! These stencils came to light when George Locke cleaned out his flat the other day. He had published this harrowing tale in his zine THE SNOWS OF KILIMANJARO. As this had a very small circulation I decided not to waste the stencils. Ken's story is still funny; and ATOM's heading deserves to see the light of day.

Besides - this may stimulate a Potter - any Potter - to write for me further. I have always thought they were one of the biggest losses to British fandom when they went Gafia.

I wonder if Gafia is infectious and they caught it from the Ashworths?

See you in December....

Ethel Lindsay.

Len Moffat  
5804 E. Gage Ave. Apt. 5  
Bell Gardens  
Calif 90201 . USA

