

FIRST THINGS FIRST

AND AS always, the first thing seems to be a general looking backwards on the last mailing, in this case the 52nd or Summer 1950. The post-mailings, in spite of the general feeling - or anyway Warner's feeling - against them, certainly boosted this mailing into the average class, at least. It was also notable for one other thing - six zines by five WSFA members. Really, Washington is becoming the Los Angeles of FAPA; what with Insurgents, intra-club feuds, etc. We even have the crazy element! But back to the mailing - more on WSFA later, maybe. Items not noted - may be taken as "noted" - which is a grand example of the non-technical use of technical language.

Spaceship #9: The little filler on the bottom of page 11 is worth reading the whole magazine for - although there might be other reasons for more fen in Calif. Depends upon the story itself..

Skylark #8: Laney's "I Am a Great Big Man!" started me to thinking of one for myself, just as an exercise in egobooing. Upon thinking around, I decided that there wasn't any use going on; the cost of stencils to publish it - to say nothing of the reams of paper - was much too large. Hence, I won't mention any of my great accomplishments, but merely say that I am a great, great big man! Anyway, I got a kick out of Laney's article (?).

Horizons #43: I agree with Harry about the postmailings. One of the things I enjoy about FAPA is the big slug of mags all at once, so that I can just take an evening off and read; when they dribble in I glance at them, thing "Tomorrow" and forget them until I start writing a review and suddenly remember some of the postmailings. I try to dig them all out, and usually miss a few - I probably will this time. Hence, I'm in favor of big mailings. It seems to me that the two changes proposed by Warner sound reasonable. The first would hit harder on those lazy individuals - like me - who put off work on a mag until the last minute and then miss the mailing date. The probable effect on postmailings would be to cut out a number, leaving only one and two sheeters for people who need just 1 or two pages to renew or big things like appeared in this mailing. The second change is not as good. Consider. Suppose a group of Washington FAPAs miss the mailing - too much beer the night the mimeos should have been turning or Frank, master of the machines, is not available or something. Anyway, there we have four or five mags, all done, and of a reasonable number of pages, but which must (I hate ads on the radio in the middle of good music programs) be mailed individually, rather than as a group. It might be possible to change this to read "...or be mailed with a similar group of publications, all originating in the same city."

The third probably would cause some trouble, since it would require the new member to jump in before he knows what is up. The rest of Horizons is full of the usual Warner meat, most of which I thoroughly enjoy, and yet don't find anything in to start a discussion. One addenda to the note on Ackerman would be his use of screwy spelling. Anything he wrote was distinctive.

Light #45 (listed in the OE Report as #5!) Norman Lamb has come up with some rather interesting figures on the current - or as of six months

ago - situation regarding the sf magazines and which give you the most for your money. The alarming thing - and one which has been pointed out before - is the high percentage of reprint magazines. Having read the sf magazines for some twenty years, and also having dug back through a number of the adventure-type magazines for another 20 or 30 years issues, I feel that I've covered the field rather thoroughly. My feelings regarding the reprint magazines, based on no long and careful analysis, are threefold:

first, I have no objection to the reprinting of stories I read years ago, or even recently in a back-dated copy, since I realize that a large number of readers are never going to be able to secure copies of those old magazines; a number I don't have myself. This would include even WEIRD TALES

to 1936, the early ARGOSY and ALL-STORY stories, and such.

second, I have no objection to the reprinting of stories from books where the books are out-of-print and scarce. Thus, much of FFM's reprints have been acceptable, from this point of view. The current - as of a few weeks ago - TWO SCIENCE STORIES, or some such title, I do not include.

third, and this is where most of the magazines fall down, I do think any material reprinted should be selected, should be of a caliber at least equal to that of the best of current stories. After all, they are picking the classics of all time. Unfortunately, for every Moon Pool or Girl in the Golden Atom printed in ARGOSY there were a dozen - or more likely a score - of stories that are not now worth collecting. I know; I've read them. And I'll admit that in a number of cases it was real work to read those stories. The same is true, in a number of cases, with the books reprinted. And then there is the final bugaboo - "editing" or chopping out sections of the story that are non-essential (which should be in "") and with no indication that this has been done. This trick is a favorite of FFM, in the cases I've checked.

One other item noted in LIGHT - actually on rereading two. Bob Gibson, in a letter mentions Palmer stating that the atmosphere goes out 15000 miles and is 18000° F there. That may be true, of course, since temperature is a measure of the velocity of a molecule and way out there, the few molecules per square meter that make up the atmosphere would be traveling with a very high velocity - else they wouldn't be there. Hence, the atmosphere extends 15000 miles - the density, unmentioned, is verrrrry low, and the molecules there are very hot - but so few would hit you in unit time that you wouldn't get more than a millimicrodegree warmer. See Ley's article in one of the last year's ASF.

The second item is the note re amplifiers. There is available now a circuit - the Williamson - using 807s that gives a response from 20-80,000 cps \pm 3db at 0.1% intermodulation distortion. Everyone who hears it is convinced that it is about the best available, and the parts run only about \$80, while the wiring is very simple. For further details contact Roy Loan, who is building one.

Skylark #8: I just noticed that under this I put a review of Laney's article from Spacewarp #41. Hence, please accept my apologies. As for Skylark, I enjoyed it; the short stories were good.

The Telisman #2: I've discussed too much of this with Roy to have any comments left, except that one side of the page makes a awful thick mag.

Snake Pit #2: I roared at some of the scenes in this. In fact, I'm going to stop awhile and reread part of it. Ten years ago "Alicia" appeared in a reprint edition, with footnotes; ten years from now will this?

RGB (at least I think that's what Briggs said the title was); this takes the cake for the fewest words spelled right in many a moon. I'm glad our boy Briggs has taken a few swings at the remarks re art being made by Rotsler. I'm no expert, so have kept my mouth shut, but I did find that the stuff I liked wasn't "art" by modest standards - although it was in the National Art Gallery. But they are for the masses with no taste, of course....

Moonshine #18: I would turn this issue over to Briggs, the charimen of the next - as well as the last - Disclave, but he's already got a copy. And I'm sure that he will find a fellow mangler of words in RMS.

Futusun #60: I don't like Coswal's making comments on the current mailing in that mailing - which is one reason I'm against a number of postmailings too - since it fouls up any intelligent discussion of points raised by others. One point Coswal overlooked in his "Attack on HPL". There were others besides the Elder Gods. Since I don't have any reference books at hand, I'll have to speak from memory. First, I think, were the benevolent, but disinterested Great Old Ones, who only occasionally appear, once I believe in a story by either Darlath or FBLong. Then there were the Elder Gods, who were against the works of the Great Old Ones (who apparently had made the earth and man) and were always trying to defeat them. As for Rotsler's defense of his style of fanzine format, I disagree. Sure, even edges look nice, and so does nice spacing, and double columns, but they all take time.. Not being blessed with an infinite amount of time, nor even enough for what I want to do, besides work and teach, I just don't have time to type up a complete dummy, and then stencil the whole thing. I tried it once and just couldn't get anything done, and that was when I had more time on my hands. As it is, I'm typing directly on stencil, composing as I go and to hell with even edges. I much prefer reading something that has something to say with solid pages and uneven edges, than a lot of nice nothing, with beautiful format. After all, I think I'm beyond the stage of picture books....

and to the post mailings (space, courtesy WR)

Neo #1: The article on Revolutions was interesting, and, actually, was exactly what several of my friends back home had argued several years ago was the only way to overthrow the government. "Das Leid von der Erde" new records! This set came out shortly after it was recorded - and that was May 24, 1936. I agree that it is one of the most effective pieces of modern music on records, especially the last movement. If you like this you'll also like "Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen" recorded by Thorborg at the same performance...if you can find a copy! Also good, and readily available on LP are the "Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen" with the mood here a gayer one, and yet bitter-sweet. On the Lincoln changer, what happens to your record if the label - as some of mine are - is somewhat worn, and won't hold a good vacuum?

Leer #2: At last someone takes a poke at Bradbury, whose plots are so much the same, and whose sheer writing carries the creaking structure of his "science". I've been reading the "Martian Chronicles" and enjoying the writing, but the science in the science-fiction just ain't. Let George O. Smith check Ray for accuracy and there would be some much better stories. (Remember the old headings in Amazing "Our stories are checked for scientific accuracy by the following board of experts...")

Contour #2 The character who wrote that letter on the last two pages was really something. One of the fellows got stuck with him after the Disclave when he appeared, and is still mad at the rest of us for not rescuing him! The letter actually exists, just as Bob typed it.

Mag Without a Name: I was glad Dunk reprinted - or rather printed Gallet's review of Micromegas, but he really should have indicated the date it was written, since a number of the statements are almost senseless without that information.

And last, but not least, Spacewarp #42, that matchless collection of unstappled sheets, which would give this postmailing the largest number of individual items in any FAPA mailing. Most interesting - and most useful was Laney on fanzine publishing. And I note that on page 9, paragraphs 3 and four Laney echoes my remarks re Rotsler's statements regarding even edges, etc.

Also enjoyed, and good for some laughs, were Kennedy's memoirs. One thing tantalizes me - That mention of the first issue of Tails of Passionate Fans. If anyone has a copy, I'd like to borrow it, or at least get the information regarding the two issues for indexing purposes.

And thus we come to the end of the 52nd mailing.

-- 0 --

People will be people department.

While leafing through the Chemical Abstract's "List of Periodicals Abstracted" I noticed a little statement; it intrigued me. The Journal of Contraception lasted for only about two years; it was succeeded by Human Fertility.

* + *

I've been making up an author index - or rather editor/publisher - from the Swisher Checklist that Bob Pavlat and I are working over. It is really interesting to see how many fans had fingers in the pie - and how many are completely unknown to most fans today. I can recognize some, but most of them are only names. Organizations such as the Bay State Science Club, which published the first fanzine called Asteroid; the old CPASF with Lowndes, Wollheim and Michel; Dennis, the first Comet and Cosmology; it makes just fascinating reading, going through the listings.

anyway, as Bob says, any help will be appreciated; no offer refused.

---*---

I had plans for several more items, but the only one I have time for now is a note on the Black Cat bibliography starting a few pages back. I hope to continue this until I have covered all the issues of this interesting little magazine available in the LofC. It paid, as you probably don't know, not by length of story, but by what it thought the story was worth. Some of its prize stories ran as high as \$1000 for a four page yarn - back in the days when a dollar was something - and it sold for 5¢! On reading them now, most of the stories stack up favorably, except for dated background, with comparable modern stories. A file would be a nice source of reading.

By til next time.

Bill

Celephais: Vol 2, No 2, Whole Number 4; October 1950, published through FAPA by Bill Evans, 4330 37th Street NW, Washington 8, D. C.

Browsing through some of my old Fantast I've found a number of items which seem worth reprinting for the newer fans who don't have access to files. Hence, from time to time - as the spirit moves me (anyone any beer to spare?) - there will be short and/or long items reprinted. The one below is by David McIlwain from the May 1939 issue of Fantast, Volume 1, No. 2. Editorial comments are by the English editor of Fay, C. S. Youd.

HOW TO WRITE WEIRD POETRY.

(Dedicated to C. S. Youd).

In the first place, it must be remembered that poets are born, and not made. So if you intend to be a poet, 'twere better if you had made the necessary arrangements with your progenitors previous to your birth. However, if you were unfortunately born without the necessary versification kink, (kinks to you my good McIlwain! -- ED) then you can console yourself by remembering that "ye must be born again", but don't forget to remedy the omission next time.

It is to the unfortunate ones that I address these few hints, those to whom poetry is an anathema, a devilish contraption turned out only with the greatest of effort and much sweating of blood. You poor fishes need never be dim bulbs at a party; they won't laugh when you stand up to recite. Instead you will hold them spellbound with beautiful fantastic verse; verse calculated to turn CAsmith green with envy, verse destined to enthrall the spirit of Lovecraft with its perfect technique.....

(All right - cut the preamble and get down to first principles - ED)

Now the easiest kind of poetry to write is the modern style - "vers libre". It may best be described as prose-poetry, since there is no intricate metre to be adhered to, and no rhymes to be painfully sought or concocted. Instead one just writes down whatever comes into one's head, always remembering to vary the length of the lines a little in order to make it seem as though there is some subtle purpose in them. Be as vague as possible - circumlocution is highly to be commended - as this will gain you fame as a philosopher and thinker. Thus, instead of saying "The sun set", you would say:-

"Far in the west,
Embedded in a sky of deepening purple
And fanned by fleecy clouds,
Sank the sun in crimson glory
Towards the beckoning ebony
Of Timbuctoo"... or words to that effect.

Notice "sank the sun" is used instead of "the sun sank" because such inversions often make critics raise their hats and henceforth link your name with Shakespeare.

So much for vers libre - you should have no difficulty with that. But the snag comes when you try to compose the more orthodox, rhymed poetry.

But you need have no qualms, for "poetic license" comes to your rescue very nicely. If anybody should be tactless enough to point out an error in your poems, just elevate your nose and say "Poetic License" (whereupon the rude fellow says "Yeah - minus the 'sense'" - I know! - ED) and your would-be critic won't be.

The most difficult part of writing verse is finding rhymes, and if you haven't got a rhyming dictionary, then you'd better get one quickly or you'll be in a hot spot. Thinking out rhymes is made all the more

difficult by the fact that the words chosen must be relevant. For instance, if your first line is -

"Oh, lovely creature born of Psyche",
then it wouldn't be much use your ending the next line with "crikey!"
And if you can't find another rhyme for Psyche besides "crikey" or "Likee"
(Chinese for like), then you'd better destroy that particular poem.
How about this?

"Oh, lovely creature born of Psyche,
Dost thou recall the shores of Waiki-
Ki..." etc.

—ED7

Always pick a simple one-syllable word with which to end a line, as this greatly facilitates rhyming. For instance it would be sheer suicide to commence a limerick like this---

"There was an old man of Brazil,
Who swallowed some trichlorophenolmethyliodosalicyl".

But substitute for the trichlor business a one-syllable word, and you're on the right road to Laureate-ship.

e.g. "There was an old man of Brazil,
Who swallowed a Beecham's pill...."

It would be more prudent if we left that particular limerick unfinished, but you understand my point, I hope?

As for metre - well, nobody ever pays much attention to that. Just remember to vary it every now and then to avoid monotony, and Keats will fade into comparative insignificance beside you. Thus, instead of --

"Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are..."

you should write --

"Little star, twinkel twinkle,
Like a blasted peri-winkle..."

It is certainly more forceful in its effect, as you will readily admit.

And now, having mastered the technique of poetry, you will be all agog to know how to combine the weird with your verses. You needn't worry as - using the above method - your poems are bound to be weird in any case. But for the enlightenment of budding REH's, I append a few hints.

You must be familiar with mythology (including astronomy), and be able to spout strange and unusual names like an over-energetic drain-pipe.

e.g. "Down in the forest something stirred. He
Listened in pain to the hurdy-gurdy..."

poem... but you get what I mean, don't you? Names such as "Shoggoth", "Naiad", "Baalam", "Wollheim" ---horrible though they may appear at first sight, have been the fortune of their respective spongers. If you can write a line of poetry like this --

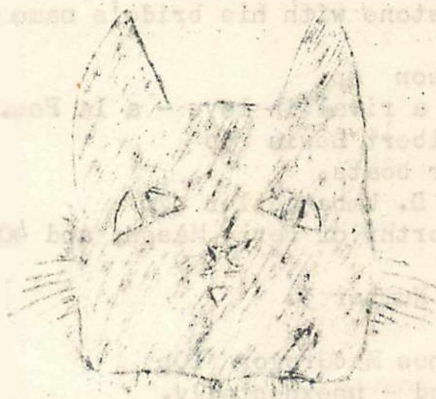
"The evil Palooka, son of Kaeva-kaeva, the rat,
Came up from Spraagnor's fiery pit, the brat!"

then
your fortune is practically made. Always use a "double A" in weird names, as this is a custom which it is fatal to ignore.

Now go ahead, and turn out weird poetry by the bucketful - you're bound to be a success. But remember, when you receive that big, fat cheque from WEIRD TALES that yours truly, the chap who trained you, would appreciate a cut - to keep him out of the workhouse.

-) O (-

The Black Cat



A MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF ORIGINAL SHORT STORIES

Published by the Shortstory Publishing Company, 144 High Street, Boston

Price: 5¢

Size 6" x 9"

The cover always featured a black cat, sometimes just a head, as above, sometimes a complete cat, perhaps dressed up, often with attractive Gibsonish girls. Each story had an initial letter with the same motif, and the space-filling cuts at the end of the stories were of the same theme.

October 1895 - Volume 1, Number 1.

In Gold Time - Roberta Littlehale 5p

A tale of the gold camps and a woman.

The Unturned Trump - Barnes MacGreggor 4p

A story of the desert - told on a fog-bound New York ferry boat.

The Secret of the White Castle - Julia Magruder 6p

A vivid atmospheric tale of necrophily.

Miss Wood--Stenographer - Granville Sharpe 12p

The inexperienced stenographer is hired to take down the details of a technical process from a deaf-and-dumb inventor who is being kept a prisoner in New Jersey by his relatives. He finally kills them, and she escapes with the secret of tempering copper - but destroys it.

Her Hoodoo - Harold Kinsabby 7p

A cow-girl tells how a cow made her what she is - very amusing.

In a Tiger Trap - Charles Edward Barnes 6p

A tiger hunt in Malaya - but with a difference.

The Red-Hot Dollar - H. D. Umbstaetler 8p

The groom abruptly leaves his bride of a few hours stranded on the train - to chase down the travels of a certain dollar. Unusual.

November 1895 - Volume 1, Number 2.

- A Calaveras Hold-Up - Roberta Littlehale 8p
A touching story of a tragic stage hold-up - it was to be his last.
From a Trolley Post - Margaret Dodge 4p
A brief episode in Boston - a young boy from Texas is bored.
An Andenken - Julia Magruder 12p
Switzerland. A young American painter meets a young untutored Swiss artist; girl meets boy, with a tragic ending.
The Man From Maine - J. D. Ellsworth 4p
The man on the train didn't drink, but, he needed medicine....
A Wedding Tombstone - Clarice Irene Clinghan 5p
The groom had a tombstone with his bride's name - dated three months after the wedding!
The Other One - A. H. Gibson 6p
A tale of revenge on a rival in love - a la Poe.
Stateroom Six - William Albert Lewis 3p
Gamblers on the river boats.
Her Eyes, Your Honor - H. D. Umbstaetler 7p
Court-room tricks, worthy of Perry Mason, and 40 years earlier.

December 1895 - Volume 1, Number 3.

- The Great Star Ruby - Barnes MacGregor 10p
A stolen ruby is found - unexpectedly.
The Interrupted Banquet - Rene Bache 8p
A banquet of the dead - to which are invited a young engaged couple
A dream, but very vivid.
The Archangel - James Q. Hyatt 5p
A mail-order bride and a practical joker.
Asleep at Lone Mountain - H. D. Umbstaetler 13p
The saga of an 18 months old baby crossing the country - alone.
Kootchie - Harold Kirsabby 3p
Cat vs. dog in Boston - a wild cat!
Frazer's Find - Roberta Littlehale 7p
The choice a man made in love and its effect on his life.

January 1896 - Volume 1, Number 4.

- In Solomon's Caverns - Charles Edward Barnes 8p
Lost in the caves under Jerusalem.
An Angel of Tenderfoot Hill - Frederick Bradford 12p
She promised to wait for him for two years, while he made good....
In Miggles' Alley - Herman Brownson 4p
Shingles, the little bootblack, playing fireman, lowers his baby brother over the roof edge - and the rope sticks.
The Missing Link - James Buckhorn 12p
He photographed a murder - and was afraid to reveal that he had.
Unchallenged - Katherine Morrow 5p
A practice joke.
Adieu - Hero Despard 6p
India. A lovely girl who is priestess of the cobras and a young man in love. Tragic.
Mrs. Emory's Boarder - C. Marie Mott 4p
An old maid's passion for a tom cat.

February 1896 - Volume 1, Number 5.

The Mysterious Card - Cleveland Moffett 10p

Richard Burwell, in Paris on a vacation, is given a card, inscribed in French which he cannot read, by a mysterious lady. Attempts to have it translated result in insults, orders to leave the hotel and the country, the breaking up of his previously happy marriage, etc. But no one will tell him what the card says. Finally in New York he finds the woman again - but she dies before he gets an explanation. Very good and quite unusual.

Tang-u - Lawrence E. Adams 5p

A small Chinese boy with super night sight becomes the hero of the Japanese navy.

The Little Brown Mole - Clarice Irene Clinghan 12p

He walked out on his wife and stayed away for five years; on his return things are as he remembered them, except that a small brown mole on her neck is gone. Unusual handling of this theme.

A Telepathic Wooing - James Buckham 5p

The bashful suitor sends his astral body to propose.

The Prince Ward - Claude M. Girardeau 13p

A haunted hospital ward finally claims its victim.

A Meeting of Royalty - Margaret Dodge 7p

The president of the railroad is visited by a small girl, and finds through her his lost love.

March 1896 - Volume 1, Number 6.

Eleanor Stevens' Will - Isabel Scott Stone 6p

Her will gave \$25,000 to each rejected suitor - and they suddenly were legion.

"To Let" - Alice Turner Curtis 4p

A haunted house - that remains haunted.

Of Course--Of Course Not - Harry M. Peck 10p

It started when she asked his advice about marrying his best friend - it ended when he married her.

The Marchburn Mystery - A. Maurice Low 21p

Murder and counterfeiting mixed together - only fair as a detective tale.

Their Colonial Villa - Charles Barnard 10p

She wanted their new house on top of the bluff, in the society section, he wanted to be on the river bank close to work. As a result the house moved back and forth, much to the dismay of the wife. Amusing.

April 1896 - Volume 1, Number 7.

The Mystery of the Thirty Millions - T. F. Anderson & H. D. Umhstaetler 9p

Seven years in the future - 1903 - and the US sends \$30,000,000 in gold to Europe - but the ship doesn't arrive. After an extensive search it is found, being towed by a super-magnetic Russian ship.

The Man at Solitaria - Geik Turner 8p

The lone agent at the solitary telegraph station goes bats and ties up the full division for hours with trains stalled all around. Some of the antics are quite interesting and amusing.

The Compass of Fortune - Eugene Shade Biebee 8p

Two men, camping in the Sierra Nevadas have an unexpected visitor who leaves a skull and vanishes. The skull leads them to an old burial cave and a treasure in gems.

A Surgical Love-Cure - James Buckham 6p

An operation to cure the love-sick; unfortunately the patient has a relapse.

- The Williamson Safe Mystery - F. S. Hesseltine 7p
A mysterious wave of burglaries in which the crook vanishes into thin air - and their strange ending.
- How Small this World - E. H. Mayde 12p
He goes to Europe to discover the girl he loves who is a friend of his best friend back home.

May 1896 - Volume 1, Number 8.

- For Fame, Money, or Love? - R. Ottolengui 12p
A device to translate music into poetry - and a fickle woman.
- "A No Account Niggah" - Leonard M. Prince 9p
A lazy negro cavalry man redeems himself.
- A Hundred Thousand Dollar Trance - Eugene Shade Bisbee 8p
Hypnotism and mental power make a man age 50 years in a few minutes - it seems.
- The Misfit Gown - Elmer Cook Rice 13p
Political Intrigue in a women's club.
- The Shifting Sand - C. C. Van Orsdall 10p
A lost indian burial cave, with gold and gems, hidden by the shifting sands and a miner who found it once and lost it.

June 1896 - Volume 1, Number 9.

- The House Across the Way - Leo Gale 24p
A mysterious hidden room in a boarding house containing the evidences of an old tragedy.. Atmosphere plus.
- Mrs. Sloan's Curiosity - Mabel Shippie Clarke 6
The young man refused to reveal his first name before the wedding, even to his mother-in-law-to-be.
- The Seaweed Room - Clarice Irene Clinghan 6p
A room haunted by a pair of drowned lovers.
- The Second Edition - Geik Turner 8p
A madman invades the newspaper office and has a "correction" inserted on the editorial page.
- The Luck of Killing Day - McPherson Fraser 7p
Two cavalry officers vie for the smiles of the adjutant's niece at the frontier post.

July, 1896 - Volume 1, Number 10.

- On the Last Trail - H. W. Phillips & Rupert Hughes 10p
A gunfight in the old West between two firends, one the town marshall the other a stubborn man who won't obey the peace orders. Unusual handling of the theme.
- A Message from Where? - L. Francis Bishop 10
A small boy discovers the letters that tell of a family and lovers divided by the Civil War.
- The Man With the Box - George W. Tripp 15p
Introducing the Universal Beverage Differentiator which converts any beverage, even water, into the appearance - to the person affected - of any desired other beverage - you name the brand. During the demonstration things go a little wrong and inventor and box disappear. It worked though. Good.
- What the Moon Saw - Isabelle Meredith 4p
He bet that he could go down in an open grave and drive a nail in the coffin. By mistake he nails down his coat - and dies of fright.
- In Miss Polly's Pew - Ellen Frizzell Wycoff 10p
He returned to his home town after 20 years and found his childhood sweetheart still waiting. BC-4