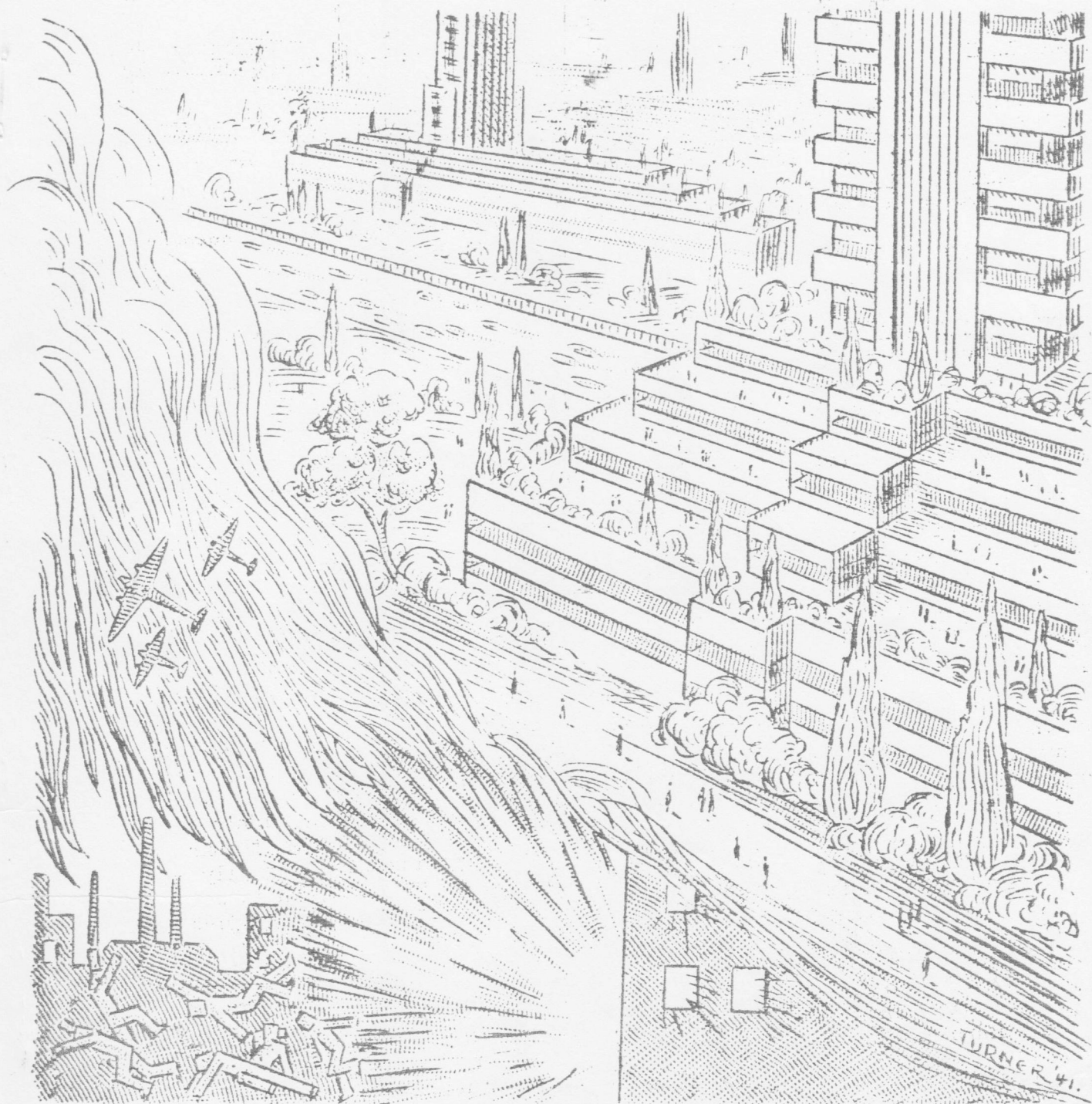


FANTAST



TURNER 41.

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Cover by H.E. Turner

 FANTAST is published at 244 Desborough Road, Eastleigh, Hants, at monthly intervals, and edited by C.S. Youd and J.F. Burke. 6d. per issue, or 1/6 for three. YOUR SUBSCRIPTION HAS 0 MORE ISSUES TO RUN. PLEASE RENEW.

FOR NO APPARENT REASON

Fantast Presents Excerpts It Likes

for no apparent reason.

VOICE OF THE IMAGINATION Jan 41:

"So Milty sits at the lovely Underwood at the office, writing a letter to Stirme der Einbildung, twenty minutes before work starts, after having arrived early in order to study his psychology notes, and after having torn up three or four such letters in the past two days, letters written at all sorts of places and times, dressed and undressed, but all torn up. ** Because a kid with a marvellous gift for writing is being pounced upon by a bunch of guys for being like Milty was not so long ago. No, Milty spent more time reading Wonder Stories and Amazing Stories than he did reading Shakespeare, but he has read a little dos Passos and Saroyan and Anderson, and his guts ache with the urge to be able to write with that sort of words. ** Is this kid being jumped just because he can use words like none of the others can? No. Because his sense of values and standards are just a little higher than the values and standards of the other pulp readers, and he reads so many books that are really good that he gets tied up in a knot inside wishing that science fiction would let go of the balency and become so really good, and it has the stuff to be better than anything else, but it won't because the people who can really write would rather write about people who are living now rather than people who might live. ** So the kid has a gripe because science fiction ain't good literature, and he doesn't fail to say so, didn't Milty say so too, so he gets lashed back at, and they don't see that he thinks so furiously and intensely that he doesn't dare say everything that he really thinks, so he compensates by being very clever and funny. ** And then it was time to work and Milty left the last page unfinished, and it was probably just as well, because he found that he was merely being sorry for himself by being sorry for Alan Roberts."

Milton A. Rothman

GENTLEST ART Feb 1941:

"Passing on to Burke again, and you too if you agree with him, the ignorant me proposes to abuse the intelligent you..... I agree that politics are artificial and not inherent in man, but they are necessary for the co-operation of men in groups, and that is the reason why Burke is not picking fleas off himself in a tree, and jabbering to the rest of the intellectual Banderlog." DRSmith.

T H E S U R V I V O R S !

RECAPITULATION:

Part I, written by Fantacynic, told how Christopher Youd, erstwhile editor of FANTAST, awoke one afternoon in a crumbling hospital bed to find himself one hundred years in the future. He realises that this strange hibernation is occasioned by an article of DRSmith's in FANTAST which has brought on a hypnosis. It seems probable that all FANTAST subscribers have had the same experience. Exploration reveals that human life appears to have wiped itself out in the Last War of 1939, and Youd realises that he bears a great share of the responsibility of bringing the Van Winkle-FANTAST fandom together. He goes to Nuneaton to collect DRSmith, and together they drive to London, and find London fans ensconced in 88 Gray's Inn Road, the old, illustrious Flat. NOW READ

PART II by JOHN F. BURKE.

Burke opened his eyes with customary reluctance, and gazed at the ceiling. He closed his eyes again, then opened them, and said "Hell's bells" in a muffled voice before struggling out of bed through a clinging mass of sheets that gave off a distinctly unpleasant odour. He regarded the ceiling again, and frowned.

True, there had been a slight crack in that ceiling last night, but it was only a small one, and could easily have been remedied with a little plaster. The network of lines that now decorated the erstwhile whiteness would need more than a little plaster.

Burke grabbed for the curtains to pull them apart, but they gave way, and let in a flood of light that illuminated an appalling sight. The bedside bookcase, crammed with Weird Tales, modern poetry, and back issues of "Rhythm" for some five years was in ruin. From decaying sheets of paper rose a stench to which only Lovecraft could have done justice, and even then only with some strain on his vocabulary. Bewildered, England's Most Aloof and Refined Fan turned once more to the window. It was hard to judge conditions outside, for 57 Beauclair had always faced on to a large expanse of allotments, all of them in that state of glorious confusion characteristic of the "dig for victory" enthusiasts. Still they did seem a little more overgrown than usual.

"It's this sleeping sickness", said Burke eventually, looking around his well-beloved room. He remembered that some weeks back he had slept until one o'clock on a Sunday morning and missed going to dinner with his relations - evidently he was afflicted with some disease.

"Should be a new Fantast out soon", he murmured to himself, preparing to go downstairs and see what the post had brought. "And - Good Gnu!"

A horrible thought occurred to him, and, although he dismissed it in favour of a more important thought concerning a date with someone that coming Saturday, it came back again with renewed force. That article by Smith in the last Fay - the one he'd awarded the colossal sum of 2 out of 10 because he thought it was so much better than Donald Raymond's usual - could it be that? He looked round at the bedside bookcase, and, sure enough, there was that issue of SUPERB SCIENCE-FICTION on top. He had been reading it just before falling asleep, and had only just about had the strength to put the light out before he fell into slumber. If that guy Smith had really done what he was afraid that guy Smith had done.....

A little investigation showed that it must be true. Everywhere was silence, a condition most unusual at 57 Beauclair Drive. With sudden fright, Burke resolved to shatter the silence before it drove him mad. He dived under the bed and emerged with his clarinet, which he fitted together with trembling fingers. The

keys were stiff beneath his fingers, and when he placed it to his mouth a piercing whistle emerged, followed by a noise reminiscent of train buffers grating against one another. Not since his early days on the instrument had he made a noise like that; he could still remember McIlwain's comments.

"Dave!" he said.

Although the McIlwain creature pretended to have grown out of science-fiction and devoted most of his time to Freud and such highbrow periodicals as "Movie Humour", Burke had a strong suspicion that this was all a blind - that the fair-haired Adonis of Cotswold Street really wallowed in Edmond Hamilton. In any case it wasn't very far.

About half way down the road, Burke's mind wandered off as usual, and he meandered blissfully over to the car stop, where he remained sunk in meditation. After about an hour had passed he looked up. The Liverpool tram services were pretty terrible, but an hour was just a little too long. Then he realised that the trams were probably not running any more. "Anyway the time-tables said "Subject to alteration without notice", so it was no good relying on them. He fumbled in his pocket for a piece of chocolate, but he could only find an old trouser-button and a rude letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, which he had never had the courage to post.

The road to the abode of his fellow jitterbug seemed longer than usual, but repeated trips had made him accustomed to the monotonous surroundings, and it was in a reasonably soothed state of mind that he rolled up at 14 Cotswold Street and pulled the bell. Then he remembered that the bell had never worked, as the string had broken about halfway along the passage and McIlwain had always been too lazy to remove the wall in order to repair it. He hammered on the door and whistled "Shoot the Likker to Me, John Boy" through the letter-box.

"It couldn't kill you, then", said a disgusted voice, and a familiar form stood aside to let him in. Burke took one look, placed his clarinet-case on the floor, sat on the hat-stand, and laughed until tears came.

"Well?" demanded McIlwain, raising a hand covered with hectograph ink in a menacing gesture.

Burke looked at the long waves of golden hair that streamed down his comrade's back, and had another fit of hysteria.

"Never mind", he said when he recovered. "What are you doing now?"

"Producing an issue of the Gargoyle", explained McIlwain. "I've been awake for two days, and it struck me, after thinking this business over, that when all the fans get together again they'll be so glad to see a fan mag that they'll fall on me. Anyway, I had to do something, and I've burned all my magazines trying to get a fire started." He indicated a mass of black rubbish in the fireplace.

"You need Les Johnson to start a fire", said Burke with a grin. "Remember those old days in the SPA room?"

They both groaned, and changed the subject.

"Can you drive a car?" said McIlwain suddenly, running a purple hand through his hair. "We've got to head out of here - I suggest we make for some big place. London ought to have quite a fair population left - at least six, I make it. I noticed quite a nice line in hearses parked outside a house a little way up the road."

Burke confessed that he had never driven a car in his life, but had seen a lot of people doing so, and thought it was easy. After trying, and nearly making the hearse into a coffin for two corpses, he eventually got things worked out fairly well, and turned towards the Mersey Tunnel.

"It may not be there now", McIlwain pointed out, "and in any case none of the apparatus will be working. We may stifle. Let's stop off at the Reference

Library and see if their files contain anything about this business".

His comrade was pleased, having intended to stop there in any case, to have a root round. Liverpool Reference Library is a noble place, with tiers of books to the roof, and little iron runways, along which travel boys picking out books that have been ordered. It gave the two a big thrill to be able to do their own running about, picking out large tomes and browsing through them. It was with a shock that McIlwain looked up and saw that it was getting dark.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "We'd better go and look for some food - I have no intention of spending the rest of my life here".

Burke, immersed in a weighty tome on the third tier, right above the doorway, ignored him, and continued turning pages over, causing a fine dust to rise and settle on his noble nose. McIlwain muttered something, and trickled across the floor to the magazine stand, where he fingered through copies of the "Amateur Photographer" in the hope of finding suggestive pictures.

"I'm sure I heard voices in here", said someone.

"What?" said Burke.

"That wasn't me", said McIlwain, looking up in surprise. The voice came again: "There - I told you so!"

"Great Gh!" squealed McIlwain, dropping the book fortunately onto the silent floor. "Ronnie Holmes - do something, quick!"

"For years", said Burke solemnly, "I slaved in the Liverpool Gas Company, and did I detest it. I see before me two of the largest volumes of which I know, namely Coe's "Practice of Gas Supply". For the first time I feel they may be of use."

He lifted one from the shelf, and looked cautiously down at the door. Still standing paralysed in the middle of the room, McIlwain's face twisted as a familiar figure entered.

"Well, if it isn't --"

Burke looked down thoughtfully, and dropped Coe's "Practice of Gas Supply" with careful accuracy. Holmes went down without a sigh, and a second person followed him.

"That was Les Heald", said McIlwain sounding a trifle aggrieved. "He might have been useful and, anyway, I like him."

"Too bad", admitted Burke, scrambling down the ladder. "Still, I had to use the second volume, and, anyway, our hearse is quite full enough as it is - I can hardly breathe with you practising Yoga exercises on the seat beside me. Come on - those other two will probably chase us to London, but it'll give us something to look forward to."

They went down the library steps in the gentle dusk, touched by a breeze that seemed almost fragrant. No more could they smell the thousand and one odours of the Mersey, and despite a somewhat startling offfluvium that came in little gusts from what had once been the fishmarket, everything was remarkably pleasant. The hearse slid forward gently, but, as they had surmised, the Mersey Tunnel was in no fit state to be travelled along, and they decided to find a little to eat, and then set out for Runcorn, or even further, since the Transporter Bridge would not be working.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

"Nuncaton", said Burke excitedly. "I wonder if Smith's alive?"

"Soon settle him if he is", grumbled McIlwain, who was not feeling any too cheerful, having only just recovered from the shock of finding that the coffin in the back was not as empty as they had at first supposed. After tossing up with Burke's last ha'penny (they had gone off to sleep the day before pay-day), it had fallen to McIlwain's lot to shift the remains before they went any further.

cr.

Smith's house was discovered, with the aspect of having been recently occupied, but as there was no-one there they were coming down the path again when Burke stooped. "A box of wire staples!" he exclaimed.

"Can't be Bob Tucker over here", said McIlwain. "I -- hey, give them to me for the 'Gargoyle'".

"To blazes with the 'Gargoyle'", said Burke chattily. "Don't you see the significance of these - the amazing import? Don't you realise what they mean?"

"Sounds like the beginning of a Lovecraft story", said McIlwain coldly. "No Johnny, I do not understand anything. I see nothing but a box of nice little wire staples which will look really at home in the 'Gargoyle', when I get them."

"You mug!" growled Burke. "What would Smith be doing with staples? These can only belong to one person - Sam Youd. Which means he's been here. For all we know, the two are on their way to London at this minute".

"All right", agreed McIlwain. "Have it your own way - if we discover a dropped aitch on the way I suppose you'll deduce that Ronny Holmes has passed us. Onward to London."

They bowled off at what was a most indecorous speed for a hearse, and as the first hints of London began to spring up about them they began to sing "Here Come the Men with the Jive" with typical fervour. Burke slowed into the end of Gray's Inn Road, intending to have a look at the famous Flat even if there was no-one at home. The sight of a car standing outside and a miniature spaceship dangling from the window brought a cheer from both of them as they swung into the side.

"Bring out your dead!" carolled McIlwain merrily, springing on to the side and bounding up the stairs.

"Wait a minute!" howled Burke. "The door opens outwards, you mug - I found that out last time I was here, and --"

He was too late. McIlwain hammered on the door, which was jubilantly flung open, precipitating him down half a flight of stairs. As he scrambled up a jug flew past his ear and crashed into Burke, who cursed fluently.

"I've been wanting to do that ever since you mucked up one of my articles", said Arthur Clarke's voice, tinged with happiness. "Now come on up."

END OF PART II. PART III, TO BE WRITTEN BY W.F. TEPLE APPEARS IN THE NEXT ISSUE

THE WRITERS

WILLIAM HARRIS.

The words that come are halt and lame
The mind gropes blindly for the right:
The thought, the thin white line, the hand,
The mental plumbing is not tight.
Between the fierce wild clarity
And the dark shapes in neat array
The impulse leaks drip drip away.
Always has been will ever same
Why strive so each succeeding day?

If we are blessed the dark is pierced
Ordered pages are not their seem
But seen, by newcome brain remade,
Are once dead passion now reborn
And fertile in the minds of men.

Prelude

"They hit the factory, you know, oh yes
smashed it to atoms -- Bert was with them helping --
it turned him sick, he couldn't eat his dinner.
Legs and arms everywhere, and one man picked
a head up, looked at it, and saw his son,
who only went to work with them on Monday."
Mashed legs and arms with all their fair companions,
Hung in steel girders against the raying west.

"Not quite 18. So young. Not 18 yet.
Was going to join the Army on his birthday.
He boxed a bit, you know" -- his right arm, find it ---
"And quite a beau" -- but Jesus Christ, his face! ---
What's to be done? The way he said: "Oh no
you don't, you bugger!", beer he drank, the girls
he kissed buzz softly round the air.
And in a long procession past his coffin
bottles unbroached, and girls he would have bussed.

Jimmy, his pal, his peaked face burning, tears hovering under, waiting for the news.
"I'll find him if it takes all bloody night -- which way the Hospital? -- God blast the syren."
The night is dead, the earth is dead, the trams dead at their posts with crimson lamps in mourning.
Only tin-hatted ghosts are on the streets, with overhead a canopy of gunfire, and the dead moon throws shadows on the road.

"If they've got Monty, Christ I'll get the sods --"
 'The rules of war are strict. You must not fire
 on single parachutists. They surrender...'
 "Whether they're one, or two, or twenty-two
 I'll get the bastards if they've laid out Monty.
 (He'll never see a German now dispassionately.)

....."the last cup he drank from. That's his fork
 still dirty, I could find no time to clean it."
 Let all his lasts be blazoned round the sky:
 his last parade (he rolled around the guard-room
 like a young kitten), his last cigarette,
 the final pint, the ultimate excitement,
 and, hung in blue and silver, symbolising
 all that he should have had, his last brief kiss.

For politicians, bankers, bishops say it:
 "Only the young die good."

They got you, Monty,
 enshrined -- the perfect boy -- upon their altars.

15/9/40 *** CSY--

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The Creed of an Atheist

by H. E. Turner

I am essentially a materialist. I believe that the universe is impersonal, the course of nature being determined by the operation of immutable laws acting mechanically. I can neither conceive of a beginning nor an ending to the universe and believe that consciousness is a normal manifestation of nature and not in any way a special creation.

I do not believe in survival after death, the concept of a mysterious, metaphysical entity or self in any degree independent of the body being a sad relic of the ghost theory of savages. Personality is a synthesis, a collection of inherited tendencies and acquired habits. The personality of a newly-born child is virtually non-existent -- the child discovers itself through its senses and with increasing experience evolves the idea of a physical self which is a basis for the psychical self. Thereafter the self is fashioned by environment, resulting in that cluster of specialised physical and mental characteristics abstractly generalised as 'I'. At death, as the conditions contributing to its existence break down, the personality disintegrates.

The desire for immortality arises, I think, from a wrong attitude towards life. Like suicide, personal immortality is in the main sought after by those dissatisfied with earthly existence. Yet what promise does eternity hold? If, as Phil Hetherington would have us believe*, the self discards the body at death, it automatically rescinds all sensation. Even our dreams during sleep (which is the nearest approach to death of which we have experience) have a physical substratum, being the result of stimuli. We are the sum of our sensations; remove those and is there much difference between the dreamless Nirvana of immortality and the dissolution of personality? Is there any valid reason why we should strive to attain this blissful sensationless state at the cost of neglect-

*See "Creed of a Tory" by Hetherington in November 1939 FANTAST.

ing this earthly life? To my mind, the end of life is not some metaphysical entity; life is an end in itself.

Since God is a product of the human mind, the question of there being a divine purpose to life seems irrelevant; I cannot believe that there is any purpose to life other than that which humanity sets for itself. Why assume life has a purpose, when appearances are dead against such an assumption? The point at issue is not what is the purpose, but what should be the purpose of life; and what greater object could there be than the enjoyment of life? Wishful thoughts of personal immortality only serve to detract from a keen, intense enjoyment of this life. What finer philosophy is there than that of Ingersoll: The object of life is to be happy, the place to be happy is here, the time to be happy is now, the way to be happy is by making others happy.

Naturally I accept the Golden Rule and see no reason for our leading decent lives other than the plain fact that we are human beings. Phil Hetherington seems to be suffering from a salvationist complex when he states that actions in this life control our environment in the next; the religious man who does good to secure his salvation and who, by implication, would not do good unless lured by the promise of eternal life or menaced by the threat of damnation, is deserving only of pity or contempt.

A life that is devoid of interests is impossible for man (and even the higher animals) so that I believe science and art are essential to the true enjoyment of life, being the overflow of physical and psychical energy and existing solely for their own sakes. Science, the seeking of knowledge, is merely the development of man's 'play' instinct. Ever since he first assumed an erect posture and thus freed his hands, man has developed this instinct - which is inherent in all animals, especially the young -- into an idle desire to understand things. The scientist, in studying the universe, is not primarily concerned with the effect of his discovery on mankind. And so with art, which is essentially a development of craft. The arts and sciences are no spiritual soporific; they are a powerful cultural force.

I consider the basis of any worthwhile social philosophy should be co-operation, not competition, and the freedom and happiness of the individual living under that system. The only true democracy successfully combining these extremes of individualism and socialism is the ultimate communist society. I do not wish to appear as an apologist for Stalinism; present events only seem to make the prospect of true communism more remote. I deplore war and all it involves, and am convinced that it can only be eradicated by the formation of the World State. So long as the narrow, nationalist outlook is instilled into the youth of the world, there is always the tendency to dispute. The greatest curse of the masses is ignorance; the only remedy knowledge. If a government refuses to enlighten its people then I am opposed to it. I am opposed to capitalism, with its class privileges and exploitation, its betrayal of humanity and prostitution of the arts and sciences for the sake of profit. I deprecate the mentality of those who support the anachronistic and superstitious absurdity of monarchy and hereditary government, who support Imperialism with its glorification of militarism and conquest. I believe in freedom of thought and speech, regarding any form of censorship and suppression as an insult to human intelligence. I am, accordingly, opposed to any form of dictatorship. Absolute uniformity of thought and belief created by a politician or priestcraft may contribute towards order and peace, but it is the peace of death -- the death of the intellectual life of man.

I am opposed to religion and do not consider it a necessity for man; it is my firm conviction that we would all be better without it. Whether

that religion consists in a belief in Hell Fire and Judgment Day or consists in the mystification and symbolisation of certain ethical truths, it is the antithesis of all that makes for progress. Surely the issue is plain; there can never be any compromise between the natural philosophy of science and the supernatural philosophy of religion, despite the assurances of many misguided authorities. It is to be hoped that the God of modern Theists is soon to tread the same path as his predecessors, Jupiter, Osiris, Bel and innumerable others, into deserved oblivion. Only then can man look forward to his future with a clear mind and secure his complete emancipation.

I have my dreams of Utopia, but my Utopia is not one of 100% efficiency, of absolute perfection. Rather it is one in which man is imbued with a more tolerant, reasonable and cultured outlook on life and is able the more readily to appreciate his imperfections and limitations. And that is the ideal to which I think man ought to aspire; to divorce himself from any superstitious support, to discover how far-reaching are his own inherent possibilities and become a law unto himself.

FANTAST has pleasure in presenting a new fan serial, with none other than that wily veteran, D.R. Smith, to set the ball rolling. Here is scope for all who know their science-fiction, and have a private peeve to work off.

THE ROAD TO FAME

Part I by D.R. Smith.

The little flying machine made three silent circuits of the City of Waiting before floating down to land in the central square, at the foot of the steps leading up to the Reception Station, where it was at once surrounded by a crowd of the most prominent of the inhabitants. Two men emerged from the cabin, a big man in a magnificent fur-coat, who, twirling a large spanner in his hand, stood guard over the door while his red-bearded companion swung himself up on to the top of the plane with an activity that did not disguise the fact that he had an artificial leg.

"The name is Kettle," he announced without any preamble. "I, and my friend Mr. McTodd, have been sent by the Ruler of the Hall of Immortal Fame to ask you of the scientific fiction stories to make a bid for the attainment of that distinguished place. It is not expected or required that you should all attempt the long and arduous journey, but if only one or two can get through the rest will be sent for automatically. The advantages are numerous, of course, the least of them being that you will have all the advantages of advanced civilisations to which you have been accustomed instead of languishing here in a primitive state that must resemble Hades to most of you. On the journey you will have to face such obstacles as the Impassable Precipice of Public Ridicule, the high passes of the Mountains of Contempt through which howls the High Wind of Carping Criticism, the Bog of Apathy in the lowlands beyond and the vast waterless plain of Mediocrity where hunt the Wild Wolves of Fierce Competition. We are only allowed to give you this map, and the encouragement that all of us who live in the Hall have had to face similar journeys."

His brief speech over, Captain Kettle dropped to the ground and handed the map over to a large, handsome man in the front of the crowd, and was about to get into the cabin again when a big, black-haired man stepped forward and addressed him in a cold, hard voice,

"Why should we not take this flying machine off you, by force if necessary,

and fly to this Hall of Fame?"

Captain Kettle gave a bark of laughter and continued on into the cabin as McTodd stepped forward.

"You'll be Mr. Duquesne, I'm thinking", quoth the Scot. "Here's the only reason I'm prepared to give the likes of you." And with the greatest nonchalance conceivable he knocked the scientist flat on his back, stepped into the plane, and was rapidly returning whence he came by the time that the astonished and annoyed Duquesne had scrambled back to his feet.

The bewilderment of the crowd gradually changed to comprehension and passed on to dispute. Duquesne made a cutting remark about Seaton's characteristic luck in having the map handed to him and nearly had another fight on his hands. In the confusion the map was dropped and seized by a short, amazingly burly man with a big blue-black beard, who fought his way out of the crowd until he could address them from the elevation of the steps of the Reception Station.

"There is no need for this foolish wrangle", he bellowed in a voice that compelled attention. "The point is that on us, the characters of scientific romance, rests the fate of our own and our literature's fame and immortality. We have heard the difficulties to face, but we have a map, and I am prepared to lead a party. In fact, George Edward Challenger goes, if he goes alone."

"As far as I am concerned you go alone" snorted Professor Summerlee caustically. "My experiences of your leadership are discouraging, sir, very much so."

Professor Challenger swelled with indignation. "You are quite right, sir, in declining to go. There will be no room for old women and cripples."

His elderly opponent returned glare for glare. "On second thought I will go. There will be great need of a sensible man in a party so led."

Meanwhile volunteers were sorting themselves out in a group, organised by Lord John Roxton and Malone. Seaton and Duquesne, watching each other like two strange dogs, Arcot, Morcy, Wade, Tarzan and John Carter, Kinnison, the Grey Lensman, Dr. Bird, Commander John Hanson, James Atkill, Hawk Carse and Friday, Gregg Haljan, Sergeant Walpole, Cossar, and others until Professor Challenger said:—"Who's going to see to the preparations, I haven't the time myself. It had better be the most intelligent member of the expedition."

"After you", said Seaton politely to Kinnison, who shook his head courteously and smiled, "No, after you." "But I insist...."

"I'll do it", said the impatient Cossar abruptly, ignoring the indignant glares of the courteous ones.

About a week later the party set out, cheered on their way by the only two of those staying behind who could be troubled to get up early enough. They made a brave show, clad in stout breeches and open-necked shirts, shod in clinker-nailed climbing boots and carrying ruck-sacks containing a three-week's supply of condensed food prepared by the combined genius of Seaton and Wade, extra clothing for the high regions they expected to scale, and an assortment of articles dictated by individual ideas. At the front Professor Challenger and his three companions each carried ropes and ice-axes, awkward things that added to the acrimony of the disputes between the two Professors. Lord John Roxton was the unwilling companion of the only incongruous member of the party, a tall slender young man whose face ran backwards both above and below his nose, fair-haired with vacuous blue eyes in one of which was fixed a monocle. He had various names but the one that was adopted was Clarence, for he was that almost legendary person, the American Idea of the Young English Aristocrat.

Behind these leaders the party spread out for some distance. Seaton walked with Kinnison, Duquesne with Atkill, Tarzan with John Carter, and so on, each

pair engaged in maintaining their reputations as strong silent men while making sure that all were well acquainted with their exploits. In spite of this blows were only dangerously near once, when Sergeant Walpole expressed with military bluntness his lack of belief in one of Commander John Hanson's stories, and the efforts of the party at preserving the peace were successful. They camped for the night far up the steep-walled valley that the map told them was the only break in the mountain barrier, and the stories that were told around the camp-fire would have made the fortunes of all the science-fiction magazines.

Two hours after their start on the following morning they arrived at the first obstacle, the tremendous Precipice of Public Ridicule which crossed the valley from side to side. On all sides the cliffs were sheerly perpendicular and smooth; the Precipice itself had an overhang at two hundred feet that cut off all view of its higher parts. It appeared that the party was defeated already.

"It seems to be impossible", commented Lord John Roxton.

"The word has no meaning to us, the heroes of science-fiction", reproved the Grey Lensman. "Now if I had my DeLameter I'd have a stairway carved up that in no time."

"If I had my X-pistol I'd blow the whole mountain out of the way" added Seaton rapidly.

"And if I had a body of steeple-jacks I'd run a lift up it", said Cossar, his tones a little sarcastic. "We've got to climb it, not wish ourselves up it."

"There is no need for you to fear defeat, gentlemen, not with G. E. C. leading the party", said Professor Challenger, preening himself visibly. "I perceive a flaw in the left hand corner of this remarkable natural phenomenon that may well enable us to overcome the difficulty."

The flaw he had noticed turned out to be an inviting perpendicular crevice apparently formed by the end wall of the valley not coming quite up to the side wall. For eighty feet it was parallel sided and an admirable width for that climbing technique known as "chimneying", then it was blocked by a flat chockstone. The most unfortunate part was that the chimney did not start at the foot of the cliff, but some twenty-five feet or more up the smooth, almost perpendicular face. Challenger was not beaten by this.

"We must form a pyramid", he said. "There are enough strong men here to do it I think; a three, two and one will be sufficient, the climber himself to be a fourth story. Now, who are the strongest here?"

It was an unfortunate question. The harmony that had prevailed was entirely lost as boastful giants swelled their biceps and described the feats of strength they had performed, and cast doubt on the claims of others. Jaws were thrust forward and fists shaken under noses. Tarzan of the Apes thumped his chest and gave his war-cry and Karn Munro staggered around holding a boulder as big as himself above his head, until Jimmy Atkill tickled his ribs. The uproar grew and there seemed to be real danger of a fight when Cossar took charge.

"Shut up! Be quiet for a moment please", he shouted. "It's not a matter of strength alone, but of height as well. Also, a certain unity about each layer. I suggest Seaton, Duquesne and Kinnison for the base, Arcot and Wade for the second tier, Tarzan on top. The upper tiers take their boots off."

This did not assuage those who he left out, but it did leave a solid band of six to back him in his decision, and that was the pyramid eventually erected. Professor Challenger was about to mount it impetuously when Lord John detained him.

"Take it easy", he urged. "Look at the gap that remains above Tarzan."

"Well, sir? Well?"

"Well, it requires someone a little taller than you, I think."

"Oh indeed. Very good, sir. I am not accustomed to being jeered at because of

my lack of height, but let it pass. Perhaps you consider your own qualifications superior?"

"Well, as a matter of fact, I do", replied Lord John, knotting one end of his rope round his waist as Professor Challenger stalked away huffily, his beard bristling with rage. Malone paid out the rope as the lean adventurer stepped from Seaton's palm to his shoulder, head to Wade's palm and so up until he balanced precariously on the top of Tarzan's head. But at utmost stretch his fingers fell inches short of the sharp edge at the foot of the chimney, and he had to retreat.

"No can do", he said breathlessly. "Suppose you have a go Malone? You're a bit taller than me, I think."

"Just a moment", interposed a voice from the centre of the base. "How much do you weigh, Malone?" enquired a perspiring Duquesne.

"Why, fifteen stone or so," said Malone, and was puzzled by the sudden hush that fell upon the pyramid. Five mighty American foreheads corrugated in painful thought, and the mental power expended was almost palpable.

"How much is that, anyway?" said someone savagely, and Malone grinned with sudden realisation.

"Whoi, it be nearly eleven score, surely", he said, and Duquesne snarled in fury. "Two hundred and ten pounds or so", translated his tormentor.

"Too heavy anyway", retorted Duquesne.

"Of course, if you're feeling the strain", began Seaton in carefully calculated tones of exasperating solicitude.

"If you'd take your fair share of the weight instead of scrimshanking..."

"Why, you jelly-bellied hell-hound..."

"Stand still, blast your eyes", wailed the upper tiers, and grumblingly the pair subsided to indignant peace.

"Anyway, I'm not much taller than you", said Malone to Lord John. "Morcy's the tallest here." But that gentleman urged hastily that he was neither a gymnast nor yet a climber.

"Well, isn't there anyone?" enquired Lord John, ignoring a remark by Duquesne that there was no need to hurry and that he, (Lord John), might have a rest and a bit of a meal before carrying on for all he, (Duquesne), cared.

"I say, old boy, I'm pretty tall. What?" remarked Clarence. "Don't weigh much either. Suppose I have a bit of a snack at the jolly old pitch, what?"

"You mean get up there and help someone else into the foot of the chimney?"

"No, dash it, all or nothing old chappie. I used to be pretty hot at this chimney business, got sent down for ranting around the jolly old roofs as a matter of fact. This rock business always seemed too jolly sweat-making, but I don't mind having a bit of a stab at it now, what?"

Challenger, who had returned to watch with an evil smile, sniffed contemptuously but Lord John rather doubtfully showed Clarence how to tie a bowline and with the thin strong rope dangling behind him and with his boots in Malone's charge he climbed awkwardly to the top of the pyramid. From there he reached up and wrapped his fingers round the edge and vanished from view of those directly below with astonishing celerity.

"I say, this is a jolly nice chimney", they heard him say as the pyramid resolved itself into its component parts with sighs of relief on the part of the lower tier, and those farthest away saw him stand erect and brace himself across between the walls. Back against one wall, right foot up on the other, left foot doubled underneath, cautious wrist of about a foot, left foot across above right and right back underneath. Such was the cycle of movements, carried out with the rhythmic steadiness that showed that Clarence had found his metier. Up and up the perpendicular cleft, pausing at times to rest and to examine the faces in

case it were possible to move out on them but always moving on, until he was right up under the big chock-stone, a hundred feet above the ground and still only supported by the friction of his back on one wall and his feet on the other.

"Now, if he can only get over that chock-stone,...." breathed Lord John, watching with fierce concentration, in imagination up there himself, braced across emptiness, realising the danger of fatigue overtaking the climber if he had to climb back down that chimney. The arms of the climber moved gropingly over the face of the rock, searching blindly for holds that were not there. He groped up round the edge of the ceiling above him with his right hand, seemed to grip something and wriggled his shoulders round until his left hand was up by the other. He seemed to gather together his resolution, then suddenly was hanging free from his hands only, his legs kicking helplessly in mid air. With a twist he brought his body round, his feet up on the wall where his back had been and walked up horizontally until he could reach for another handhold and bring his feet across on to the chock-stone below him. Then he scrambled rapidly out of sight, after a minute's rest on that comparative safety.

"Good work, very good work indeed!" commented Lord John, drawing his first real breath for some time. "Let's hope it is possible to continue on past that chock-stone."

The non-climbing members of the party were looking very thoughtful at the prospect of having to follow, but before any comment was made, Clarence's face became visible over the edge, peering down at those below. Before he could speak Challenger's bull voice flung up the eternal query of the climber:-

"Will it go?"

NOTE: This story is to be the "Pilgrim's Progress" of science-fiction. In the first instalment DRSmith introduces as many characters as he could think of from well-known science-fiction stories, and although we don't want the story overcrowded, further combatants can introduce anyone else if they wish it. The idea is to make things as awkward as possible for the next participator, and then to name someone to take over the story. Anyone wishing to join in should write to the usual Fantast address intimating such a reckless desire, and we'll see what we can do. This will be the first intimation received by D. Webster that he is to write Instalment 2/ EDITORIAL NOTE: As with "The Survivors", following instalments MUST be in within a fortnight of receipt of magazine, or arrangements will have to be made for someone else to carry on. If the person cited is unable to write his part he should inform us AT ONCE. Temple and Webster please note.

§ § § § § § § § § § § § § § § § §

INQUEST

by John B. Michel

Now, aesthetics, stop!
Stop the flashing noon of your devastating wit;
lay down your tools and pencils,
mediocre craftsmen of a slowly dying world!

Can you sway the concrete towers,
push the rivers from wet orbits,
kick the floating shield from heaven,
halt the lightning's parry stroke?

What's your worth -- your exchange value
 to the burst that is tomorrow?
 Show your papers -- show your passports --
 don't produce the worthless trash
 that you've spawned in obscene darkness,
 that's your key to yesterday.

What we want is valid purpose
 (what we want you haven't got)

So get out putrescent failures,
 fade away with all the spirit
 of an age that's fast receding.
 Take with you your threadbare splendour,
 flee with all the age-soaked raiment
 of humanities long dead,
 with the knowledge, poor, pale lilies,
 deadly, dear myopic corpses
 that the structure of the future
 can't be built with dime-store junk.

Michel.

§ § § § § § § § §

FANTASY AS SEEN BY THE ORDINARY MAN WITH A TYPEWRITER
William Harris

Let it be quite clear, please, that I like fantasy. It's because I like fantasy that I am worried by such publications as I have been led, ever so gently and kindly, to read. I haven't seen many, and so I haven't seen much. The ideas I've got are probably based on insufficient data, are probably wrong: but, on the other hand, they are the ideas of someone looking on, an ordinary man with a typewriter faced with an altogether extraordinary venture.

It's a queer business, this science-fiction. To me its most deplorable feature is the nature of the characters it invents. Soulless, two-dimensional sketches, unworthy of the white towers they build. Maybe a space ship is a good background for an eternal triangle and he-man adventures. At least let the triangle be pointed on life and the he-men human. "Science" is orderly thinking, & orderly thinking demands that our fellows, placed in experimental surroundings, still act as our fellows. I distrust the preoccupation with background, and the limitation that a determination to write in one locale places upon the writer's efforts. I distrust even more this populating of wonders with conventions. Even Hardy did not invent his people as an excuse for picturing the tree past which they walked.

The authors seem fascinated by ways and means. They are excited by a space ship. Now to me, and I'm trying not to sound superior, a space ship is just a pleasant probability, a sort of glorified motor car. Admittedly it will be good to travel in one, but not fantastic.

Fantasy to me is an attitude of mind, an appreciation. It is something that can exist apart from the improbable or even the unlikely. It comes as a flood of feeling that colours life for days. It is loosed by a sudden word in talk, an action that, illogical, is yet a logical extension of logic. It won't be pinned down neatly and defined, but it's there, completely satisfying, ultimate, logical, inevitable. In the mind of him who writes and him who reads. And not all the space ships and planets in the cosmos can supply it if the mind is

not there.

What I do find is plenty of fuss. Given, say, a conception of time to deal with, authors and characters rush about look look everyone look! There is a lot of bother and people "set out" and "travel" and "swim time-streams" and don't do anything much beyond change their environment sensationally and shoot a few monsters with atoms. There is no suggestion that they add to mind and spirit. It is here surely that the writer makes the worth of his story.

I have singled out stories of time, because it is in them that I feel the lack most clearly. I cannot remember a period when time did not seem unreal, something that might suddenly not be there. I felt no incredulity, only a recognition when as a boy I read E. Nesbit. I should feel no incredulity and little surprise if, walking on a hillside, I became aware of its earlier inhabitants. I feel no incredulity, only interest, when I get one of my "Dunne" dreams and later re-live it. The palpitations that come off the "science fiction" page at the mere idea of time travelling - the idea and the excitements by the wayside - deny the orderliness that is science and the attitude that is fantasy.

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MATAIYA

by R. W. Lowndes.

On the eve of the serpent there came unto him the old madness so that again he must throw aside all other endeavours and seek out Mataiya. Out of his apartment he strode naked, his eye agleam, and those who strolled the moon-splashed sidewalks said unto themselves: "This man is blessed with the madness of Shaitana", and suffered him to pass unhindered.

Thus he strode on with naught for a cloak but the night wind wisping in from the sea and the pallid store windows flung back the glory of his nakedness and in her othercal splendour Luna smiled from the clouds. On and again on he strode tirelessly until at last the city lay far behind him and he had come to the whispering shore. Here crowded about him the grey ones, who seek they know not what in the arms of the sea, and here he found the stairway reaching far up into the velvet night.

Thus and thus he clomb the starflung stairway until earth itself was no more than a pretty bauble in the ebon vastnesses, and before him in the nimbus of night-glow loomed the secret place of Mataiya. Here he rested a while in the shadow of her knees, and as his breath came back to him he sang the song of his madness, so that the stars swung to him more closely that they might hear his singing. And there came stealing unto him the slim fingers of Mataiya and gently they touched him and tenderly they lifted him into the palm of that hand of which poets have sung timelessly, even back to the days of the garden. In the palm of Mataiya he rested, peering over the edges at the deeps about him as he was carried to her face.

Through time-lost ages he gazed at her face, magnificent in the silence, and his heart boomed within him as upon the titan's countenance there grew a smile and a gladness. Again the fingers stroked him. Then he was carried to her breast, where he rested and beheld the panoply of the cosmos about him. From the perfume of her breast he drank strength and delight, and a desire nevermore to depart from the body of his beloved.

Long he rested, then ran joyously to slide between the breasts of her down to the verdant meadows of her abdomen. The fingers found him happily engaged in exploration, this time not so gently carrying him up to her face. No longer smiled Mataiya; the eyelids were nearly closed and her mouth was a vast slit of displeasure. Vainly he sought to reach the edge of the hand, leap into

the night about him. But the hand tilted and he fell back into the palm.

The fingers closed.

.....

Letters to the Secretary of an Interplanetary Society: by Arthur Ego Clarke.

***** ** *** ***** ** ** ***** ***** ** *****

Sirs,

I see that your society is interested in interplanetary travel. I would like a full account, by return of post, of all the work that has been done on this subject, together with a detailed calculation, to nine places of decimals, of the orbit of a spaceship from the Moon to the third satellite of Jupiter, allowing for all gravitational perturbations. I enclose $\frac{1}{2}$ d. stamp.

Dear Sirs,

I have discovered a secret fuel half a pint of which is capable of blowing up the Great Pyramid. I am prepared to sell it to you for £100,000 cash down.

Sirs,

We would like to remind you that our account of £56-4-8 for the manufacture of one gear wheel is still outstanding, and would appreciate an early settlement of same.

Dear Sir,

You seem to have forgotten that because space is empty there will be nothing for your rockets to push against. Your society is a bad example of the sort of thing that happens when people embark on a project without giving it sufficient thought.

Dear Sir,

Unless the crew of your spaceship have their horoscopes cast before they leave the earth the venture is bound to result in disaster. My spirit guide, Pink Elephant, has told me to give you this warning.

Sirs,

My firm, Messrs. McGregor & Finklestein, would be glad to forward an estimate for the interior furnishing of your proposed spaceship.

Dear Sirs,

Your spaceship is all wrong. It would be incapable of leaving the earth, though if it did it would fall to bits in space. If it reached space it would certainly crash on the Moon, and if it succeeded in reaching the latter it couldn't take off again. Even if it got back to earth it would certainly fall in the sea and the crew would be drowned. Therefore why waste your time on something that is so obviously impossible?

Dear Sir,

Why do you want to reach the Moon? What's wrong with the earth?

TO AN UNKNOWN FAIR.

With acknowledgments to Russell Chauvenet & DETOURS
This was decreed by superior powers
In a moment of wisdom sidereal:
That those who dwell upon ivory towers
Shall have heads of the same material.

further fantasteditorialcsyoud

We trust that it will ~~irk~~ those of our readers who are both pacifists and FANTAST devotees to learn that the growing militarism of the nation is directly responsible for this and possible future issues of the magazine. For on learning that the probabilities indicated our translation into uniformed slavery within the next six months we were exalted into the selfless determination to spend that intervening time to a major degree in producing as many issues as possible. Early readers will recall that the first six issues of FANTAST appeared at regular monthly intervals, and although only two issues have occupied the following eighteen months we think it easily possible to maintain a new uniformity of publication.

FANTAST, then, will appear monthly (on or about the 20th), provided that adequate support is received from readers. In the past some subscribers have tended towards lethargy in financial response, and we wish to stress that in future the magazine will be sent only to those with fully paid-up subscriptions. Delay will not only jeopardise your chance of receiving further issues, but will also jeopardise the future of the magazine itself. The new price of sixpence will possibly be resented by some but will certainly be understood by the sympathetic few who have themselves run fan magazines at a loss. The question of readers in the services is difficult, too. We would like to waive or, at least, reduce their subscriptions, especially in view of our own pending translation, but the simple fact that this is a nation in arms makes it impossible. The majority of fans have suffered a change in conditions through the war.

Contributions are welcomed, but they must be of sufficiently high literary quality. Those contributing prose of at least a page's length, or poetry of half a page will receive a free copy of the magazine. Should they have a subscription it will be lengthened by one issue. There is at present a fairly ample stock of good material by such writers as J.F. Burke, M.K. Hanson, J. Rathbone, R.W. Lowndes, D.R. Smith, E.S. Needham and Osmond Robb. We venture to hope that these and other contributors will make it possible to continue raising our artistic level.

When the threatened ~~mitrisation~~ of Youd is completed the magazine will go a-begging, and we seize the opportunity of asking now if there are any willing to volunteer for proprietorship for the duration, in order that the last literary light of British fandom shall not go out. We guarantee to hand the magazine over in a solvent condition, together with a six-month subscription!

Elsewhere in this issue will be found a statement re YOUR subscription. To the majority it will be a signal for renewal - please comply. Should a mistake have been made (and even editors are prone to them), please notify immediately. It is requested also that for the present subscriptions be confined to three-month dimensions, i.e. 1/6.

It is impossible to thank the following too much. Primarily, of course, J.F. Burke for nobly undertaking the donkey-work of duplication, gathering, stitching and mailing. And Douglas Webster who volunteered to help with stencilling, Erik Needham who generously offered, "If funds are low could I send you something to help with the good work, say 10/- or £1 or so?", Harry Turner who nobly rushed a cover at extremely short notice. Gentlemen, you are gentlemen!

Finally - the question of politics. The audience of FUTURIAN WAR DIGEST -- not, be it noted, the editors! -- objected rather vigorously to political controversy in that magazine. We believe FANTAST readers are of sterner stuff. At any rate it will be our policy to publish material outside the normal scope of fantasy. Pacifist, communist, conservative - fascist if you feel that way. Editorially this magazine favours prosecution of the war and the New World afterwards, but we will give as much rope as space allows to exponents of other ideas. We hope to continue the CREED articles indefinitely, and have on hand avowals by R. W. Lowndes, Osmond Robb and Eric Williams who, if they have changed heart in the past year, would be well-advised to inform us!

F A N T A S T ' S F O L L Y !

And the letters are dated, for obvious reasons.

D.R. Smith, 18-5-40, writes.

"The cover does not seem so good as Turner's previous efforts either in design or execution, but the verse appealed to me immensely, forming part compensation, as well as enabling one more readily to interpret the rather hazy symbolism of the picture. *** "The Survivors" is another of the especial reasons why I hope that Fantast's revival will be permanent. If successive contributors can live up to the promise of the first instalment it has a future, though at the same time the merit of the first instalment depends to a certain extent on the following instalments because it contained so much that was introductory. The description of your noble self was interesting, if accurate, and it will be still more interesting if anyone tries to describe me, especially as I do not exist if Burke is to be believed. (Hanson was a bit doubtful the last time he wrote, even though I do write to him which is more than some people do apparently!) I am grateful for the idea that I saved the world, though I have my doubts as to my pen ever rising to the heights attributed to it. *** I did not find the next article much to my taste. It seems scrappy and uninspired, the arrows of satire were about as sharp as snowballs and the cracks lacked punch. As for the phrases from the Bible, surely something more to the point could have been found? And hasn't something of this nature been published before? The satire was not delicate, it was positively weak. *** I enjoyed Michel's poem this time, more because I have a palate for invective and abuse than because I understand the sentiment. I agree with Michel in disliking Ezra Pound, though not for the same reason, for after an intensive training on "new writing", (the lack of capitals are their's not mine), I am inclined to agree with his quoted sentiment. But I did like the poem. *** I was glad to see that "Department" continues its course, taking as I do a sort of fatherly pride in it. I enjoyed Webster, though I would not go bail for the coherency of his argument, and the same goes for Burke. It is a pity that the latter's best point in favour of my non-existence, namely his last, is one that the majority of your readers will not be in a position to check, though there is no doubt of the truth of it. On the other hand I trust that you will indignantly refute the slur on your fair name of his inference that you are responsible for all my articles. The whole thing is, of course, a bluff by Burke to conceal the truth that was beginning to leak out, that he himself has recently been writing the DRSmith articles, having purchased the selling power of that omnipotent name off its creator, Hanson, for a considerable amount. The writer of this letter is yet a third well-known fan, who was hired first by Hanson and recently by Burke to keep up the correspondence in Smith's name in order that the illusion of Smith's actual existence should be kept intact. Since Burke himself, however, has seen fit to betray the secret partially the writer sees no reason for not betraying the whole, especially as Burke is very slack in his payment for this work. For obvious reasons however I do not propose to betray my real identity, lest the wrath of the deceived ones fall on me. The next move is up to Burke; I anticipate that he will make a hasty attempt to conceal the effects of his ill-advised betrayal of his own secret, but should he be honest enough to admit all and vindictive enough to betray me, I trust that you will, before publication, notify me in time to take precautions against the undoubtedly violent repercussions of this unparalleled betrayal. *** Granting Robb's premise, that there exists a definite school of thought that the time is approaching for a higher form of humanity to be created as it is presumed the first mammals were created, by mutation, his article is a well-developed criticism and an interesting piece.

logic. And when I look back down the years and remember such articles as "Are Fans Star-Begotten?" there is value in the idea that his criticisms are against something concrete and that he is not merely beating the air. But for all that I cannot honestly say I enjoyed this article, which I can only attribute to it being too solid fare for my flippant tastes. *** The psychoanalytical editorial fulfilled its duties sufficiently well, though I disagreed with the idea that no-one ever reads back issues of fan-magazines. At least one person does, and that is the writer, & though his collection is mostly limited to magazines in which DRSmith articles appear you cannot accuse him of narcissism (that word seems to fizz about a syllable too much, but I am cribbing it off you), for the reasons stated at the top of the page. *** I tried to obey instructions in the matter of starting a serial, and as a result of almost a week's cogitation I produced something which offers such interesting possibilities that I am almost jealous of the thought that it must fall to alien hands to guide it on its way. *** In spite of my remarks I still seem to be playing Burke's game for him and keeping up the pretence of Smith's existence. Perhaps, after all, such will be the best game to play in order to confound him still further. I may even write Smith articles myself, as well as Smith letters, and so create a situation in which everyone but myself will gradually go mad!

Uniformed author, Bill Temple, 2.5.40,

"Eric Frank Russell surprises me greatly by casting suspicion at Wells. I had thought him a more astute judge of character. Does Russell really imagine that the British Government is subtle enough for what he accuses it of? /i.e.--the Fortean conspiracy mania./ I wish, then, that they showed such subtlety and penetration in the conduct of this war. So far I can see nothing but a total lack of subtlety and penetration. Anyone who has digested Wells' "Autobiography" or seen the tortured soul revealed in "The Undying Fire" or "The Anatomy of Frustration" or "Boon", or a score of other Wells books, or read his statements in PICTURE POST, in which he plays Chamberlain, Simon, Hoare & Co. alive, or heard him, as I have, say these things in public in front of a largely hostile audience, can sense the passionate sincerity of a man who says straightforwardly what he believes, and who is thwarted not only by greed, malice and power-seeking, but also by people who are so cynical of human nature that they cannot conceive that there are people who are not self-seeking & therefore there must be a catch in it. Russell should learn to put a little faith in someone other than himself. Rugged individualism is not going to create anything but a mess. /Since this letter a taste of army life may have tempered Bill's big-hearted faith in human nature. On the other hand we cannot resist pointing out that there is much truth in his last sentence, and that it applies to certain individualist-pacifists as well as our two-fisted typewriter-puncher./ *** I was much interested in Robb's "Messiah Complex". I remember revealing, among gasps, at a London gathering, that the author of "Child of Power" was actually John Beynon Harris, but the news doesn't seem to have got about much."

Renny Rennison, editor of COSMOS, 7-2-41

"As I said to Doug Webster in a letter tonight, I for another am proud of my countrymen - they're pretty swell. Nothing can be so radically wrong with a people who are sticking together like we are. We're united and look like stopping that way - for good I hope." /Temper it with moderation, Renny. Unity, like sincerity, can be good or bad. And the magnificence of the British - or any other - people does not, unfortunately, extend to mental spheres./

Co-editor, Johnny Burke, 10.2.41:

"I tackled The Babes in the Darkling Wood with some trepidation, and enjoyed it from start to finish. I don't agree with a lot of Wells' ideas, but this book is really worth reading. Despite the unorthodox presentation, I think he has come nearer to understanding and practising the true art of the novel in this than in anything else he has written." AND SO - AU REVOIR? A LARGER FOLLY, TOO, WITH YOUR HELP.