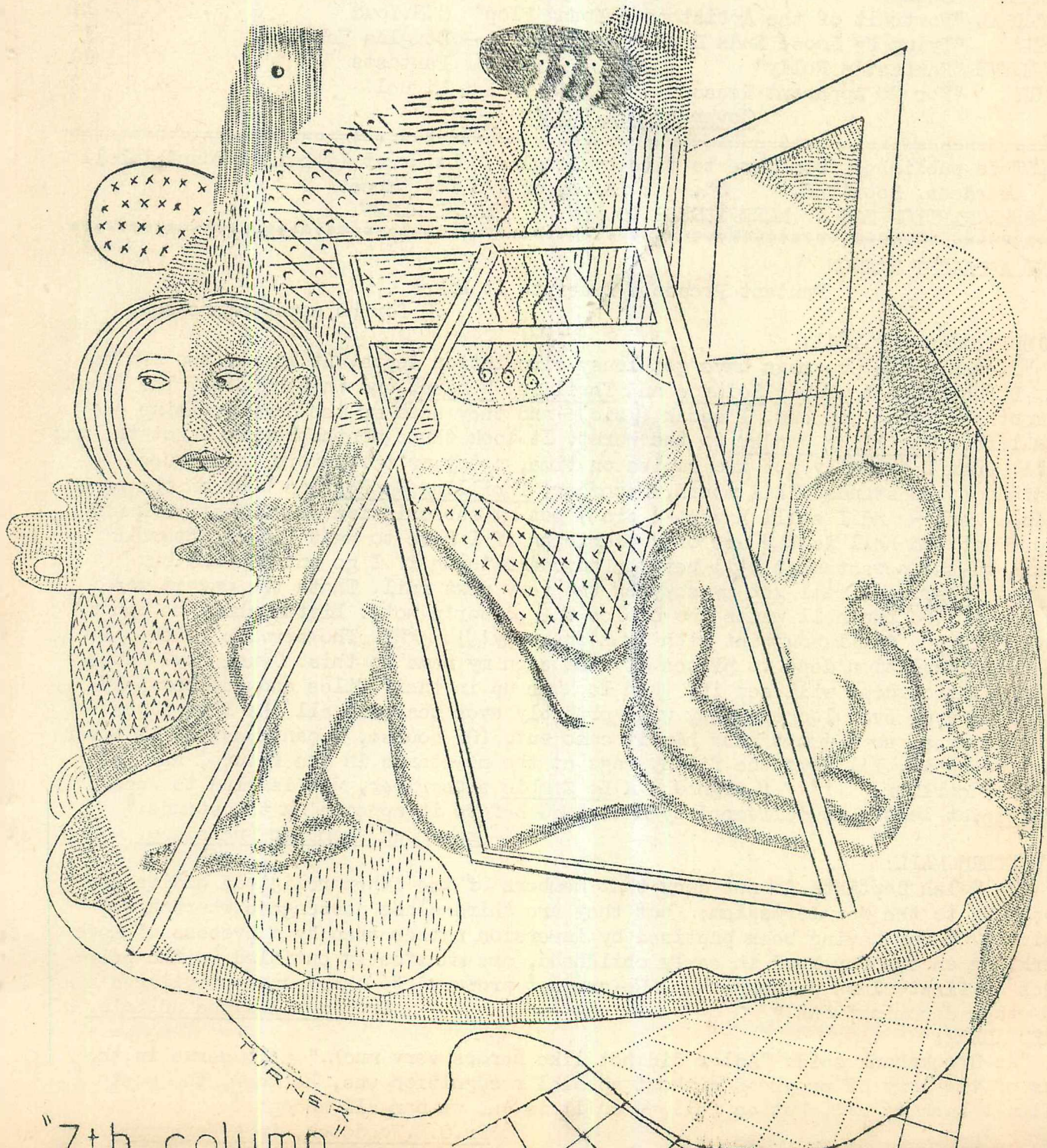


the fantast

november
1941



"7th column"

ECCE HOMO	"Cosmic Case No. 5"	D.R. Smith	3
RESURGENT	"Dialectic"	--poem-- W.G. Harris & C.S. Youd	5
IDEALIST	"Opinion"	--creed-- Eric C. Williams	6
HERMIT	"Radio"	--poem-- William Harris	7
SUSPENSE	"The Road to Fame" Part III	D.R. Smith	8
TRUSTFUL	"De Omnibus Dubitandum"	Julian F. Parr	13
PARANOIA	"Swine"	--poem-- Frieda Wilson	14
ANALYTICAL	"Portrait of the Artist as a Young Flop"	C.S. Youd	14
NURMENT	"Tying Up Loose Ends Dept."	--editorial-- Douglas Webster	17
DISCURSIVE	"Fantast's Folly"	Fantasts	18
NAUGHTY	"For No Apparent Reason"	Miguel	2

Cover by H.E. Turner

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YOUR SUBSCRIPTION HAS MORE ISSUES TO RUN. PLEASE RENEW.

FOR NO APPARENT REASON

Fantast Presents Excerpts It Likes

for no apparent reason.

LE ZOMBIE, January 1941:

"Lissen:- The pro mags have got lousy circulation depts. At least, two of 'em have. I subscribe to Super Science and Thrilling Wonder, and what happens? The first two months nothing happens. I squak ((sic)) and they send me the damn magazine - a month late. Thrilling Wonder is the worst. It took three months before I got the mag at all. Then I actually got two copies on time, a day or two before the issues appeared on the stands. This month, December, Thrilling Wonder has been on the news stands a week - and I still havent ((sic)) got my subscription copy. Fast work eh? ** Now what the hell is the use of subscribing if I have to wait a week after it appears on the newsstands? I'll bet you any damn thing if I go out now and buy Thrilling Wonder, I will get my copy by the very next mail. Thats the way it was last month. Who the hell wants two copies? ((editor's note: Listen chum, we can't see what in the devil you want with even one copy!)) *** The service stinks. I hate the circulation dept to pieces. I wont sign my name to this. Cause why? Cause the circulation dept will see it, then look me up in their files and deliberately hold my copy up even longer. They will probably even tear out all the last pages of the stories, so I won't know how it came out. (Of course, I can guess). I'll never subscribe again. I'll buy the filthy rags at the newstands in the future, and get it a week earlier. ** ((signed)) A Le Zombie subscriber, who is glad to report Le Zombie, at least, is delivered by mail LONG before it appears on the stands."

Anonymous from San Fransisco.

THE WESTERN MAIL:

"We Welsh Baptists do not deny that members of the other religious bodies are travelling to the New Jerusalem; but they are third-class passengers whereas we, in virtue of our having been baptised by immersion rather than by a process of mere sprinkling on the forehead in early childhood, are manifestly entitled to the privileges of first-class passengers. We are not prepared to share such privileges with other denominations."

From a religious article.

ALFRED ADLER:

"As Crookshank said: "Adler did not like heroes very much." To serve in the ranks of the Army of progress without special recognition was, he knew, the most difficult task of all, but as fellow-men it is one we can all accept."

Dr. O.H. Woodcock, in a Foreword.

FANTAST PRESENTS --

A continuation of the old NOVAE TERRAE series --

COSMIC CASE No.5

by
Smith

Homo Sapiens, 397-5756, versus Golialian, 394-2398. At the Hall of Justice, Planet Nediren, before the President of the Court of Racial Rights.

Prosecuting Counsel Sir Watt A. Mann stated his case as follows:-

"My case is a minor one and it is only because of the obstinacy of the Golialian Race that it is necessary to waste the Court's time on it. It arises out of an arrangement between them and us by which our scientists exchanged with their's representative samples of the smaller fauna of each planet for purposes of observation, the stipulation being that the samples were returned in a certain time alive and undamaged. The scientists of my Race sent a small bowl containing three small fishes in their natural element, a white rat in a cage, and a very fine specimen of the genus felis domesticus angorensis. The first two are typical laboratory specimens, the last is a domesticated animal of greatly superior intelligence and will.

"In due course we returned the animals loaned to us, and requested the return of the samples we had sent. To our horror we were informed that the first two specimens mentioned had been lost through the wilful carelessness, as we deduce, of the experimenters, while as to the third the reply was a curt rejoinder that if we wanted the animal we must come and fetch it. Words cannot express the wave of indignation that swept our people when this unprecedented piece of piracy was reluctantly made known to them. My Race, Mr. President, is one which feels very keenly for the sufferings of the least of our cousins of the lower orders of the animals, and every one of us was shocked and disgusted by the villainous cruelty of these hypocritical beings.

"Mr. President, I charge the Golialian with a deliberate conspiracy to cause a breach of the peace, with the theft and malicious destruction of our property, and with a flagrant breach of contract. I ask that the surviving member of the samples be returned immediately to us and that my Race be heavily compensated for the wrongs we have suffered at the hands of these unscrupulous rogues."

Sir Watt retired, breathing heavily after his outburst of indignation, to give place to the defending Counsel, Swelp Mebob, who happened to have been a member of the scientific body to which the samples had been entrusted.

"Mr President, the true account of the actual facts of the matter which I am about to give you, will show, I think, that not only are the charges against my Race absolutely unfounded, but that we have ourselves been the victims of a conspiracy of unparalleled impudence. I intend to prove that the entire affair was an ingenious plan on the part of Homo Sapiens to sabotage the experiments and to put my Race in its present predicament. Whether the motive behind this plot is a deliberate desire to injure my Race or merely a product of the peculiar sense of humour of which this Race boasts I do not know, but I propose to give the true facts of the case as I know them, being an actual participator in the experiments.

"The animals as described were indeed sent to us with instructions for their care and feeding, and the only fault that appeared with them was that the cat, to abandon the rather lengthy description adopted by Sir Watt, the cat was a larger animal than we desired, our Race being more delicate than Homo Sapiens due to the lower gravitation of our planet. However, we found that the animal was not so

large in actual mass as appeared, owing to its coat of long hair, and seemed to be very mild and friendly by disposition, and therefore we accepted it as a subject for investigation of its behaviour.

"The first experiment was to be a simple test of the relative intelligence of the cat as compared with the rat. A container filled with the white fluid known as milk was placed on a table which was connected with a similar table by means of a bridge. The bridge was barred by a high gate which was free to open but which only swung towards the table on which it was proposed to place the two animals; the idea being that the animal which more readily comprehended this and so found its way across to the food would be the more intelligent.

"First the rat was placed on the table and we prepared to observe its movements. Although it had not been fed for some time it showed very little initiative and remained in a lethargic posture, cleaning its whiskers meditatively. We therefore placed the cat on the table and the most shocking incident took place, an incident which took us completely by surprise. With a single bound the cat seized the smaller animal in its savagely fanged mouth, inflicting severe wounds. Of course the superintending biologist immediately tried to intervene, but when his hand approached the pair the cat emitted a sound of such indescribable fury that he retreated in horror. A daring assistant persisted in the face of this threatening sound and received a severe wound on the arm from the paw of the murderer, a paw which we had thought to be softly padded, but which had abruptly developed an array of feindishly sharp talons. There was no alternative but to allow the predator to continue its crime by eating its victim, after which it had the supreme insolence to leap across to the other table, ignoring the bridge, and drink the milk there provided. When a hero later approached it as it placidly licked itself all over it fawned on him and allowed him to pick it up and place it in the special room provided.

"After this calamity a meeting was held to discuss the matter, and a lengthy argument took place as to whose was the responsibility. It was finally decided that since the scientists of Homo Sapiens must have known of the character of the animal it was their fault for not warning us. Due to the length and interest of the debate the animals were unfortunately forgotten for a considerable time, and I may say that it was with considerable trepidation that we entered the room where they were kept, in fear of the possible rage of the cat. Our relief at finding the terrible animal placidly asleep was shattered by the sudden realisation that the fishes were missing from their bowl, and the sight of a few bones on the floor explained their fate and the complacency of the cat, which had been aroused by our entry and had begun stretching itself leisurely.

"While our minds were still stunned by this fresh evidence of the supernal malignant powers possessed by this furry fiend it arose and strolled out of the room before anyone could think to close the door. With infuriating stateliness it progressed along the corridors until it came to the door communicating with the entrance hall of the building. At this barrier it halted to give a single imperious cry, demanding that we open the door and let it out. We trembled, but naturally did not obey. The cat turned its gaze upon the door again, noticed the red push button controlling the mechanically operated door, reached up and patted the button with its paw. The door opened and the animal stalked through, waving its long bushy tail scornfully.

"Since that time it has utterly ignored all attempts to restrain it. It lives in the open mostly, but frequently enters our dwellings to steal food and to rest on our couches and beds. Several times it has made vicious attacks on the

inmates of our menageries, killing and eating animals of great rarity and value. We are bound by our agreement not to destroy it, but find it impossible to capture it by force, for it is too agile, too powerful, and too cunning. There is nothing we desire more strongly than to have this animal removed, but it is beyond our powers.

"Mr President, I think I have demonstrated fully who are the true sufferers in this case. In the place of the fancied moral wrong we have done Homo Sapiens I have shown that that Race have, through their malicious scheming, done us an enormous amount of actual physical damage, not counting the immense nervous strain our people have suffered through living in vassalage to this animal. I ask only that the charges be dismissed, and that Homo Sapiens be compelled to remove this animal from our world. In return for this I waive all the counter claims for reparation which we might justly bring against the perpetrators of this senseless outrage."

The President:-

"It is obvious that there are faults on both sides. I have no doubt that Homo Sapiens, who we well know are a childishly irresponsible race, lent this cat to the Golialian in the full knowledge that it would lead to awkward situations. On the other hand there is no doubt that the Golialian, by their naive stupidity, are themselves responsible for most of the damage they suffered. I must request Homo Sapiens to remove their cat themselves, though I only do this because they so earnestly desire the animal. As for the compensation they claim, I think that the overwhelming success of their practical joke is sufficient. Both Races are reprimanded for behaving in a manner unbecoming members of the high civilizations to which they belong."

D I A L E C T I C

by William Harris and Christopher Youd.

The All Clear bellows its amazed relief
And life goes on, but not for all.
Here where new landscape simulates old age,
Confined in stone, with oil smoke for a pall,
The city writhes in death. But we, the mourners,
Like holy spires of churches or the tall
Factory chimneys, with a vague compassion,
Watch those who never rose, and mark their fall.

We mourn the syrens blown for tea,
White light from windows carelessly,
Gay church bells ringing usually,
And ham and ecstasy.

Here where grey learning hugs the mindless floor,
Here where esoterism's mirror breaks
And opened windows look on terraced girders,
Fear lies in hollows like pellucid lakes,
And men tread water, make for shelving shores
To Crusoe's loneliness or ale and cakes --
Security to lull a mind to sleep,
Sweet dreams to mask a city's wakes.

Dream awhile my darling till the moon grows cold,
 Dream awhile disciple till the mind grows old,
 Dream awhile my lady till the rats are bold,
 Dream awhile comrade till the pass is sold.

They lie at awkward angles, have no need
 To mourn or dream. Their shell's strange end
 Is their renewing in some time or place
 Where time and place are not. We, their friend,
 We who mourn and dream, who fear and swim,
 Must land and make encampment, bend
 To our device envorons, clear the thicket,
 Clean us with running waters, and descend.

Poor man, rich man, wash you clean,
 Wash you curate, wash you dean,
 Wash you mill-girl, wash you queen,
 Wash right down to what you mean.

Wash right down to your human skin,
 Wash away the ugly, burn away the fin,
 State quite plainly there ain't no sin,
 Open up the floodgates, let the new life in.

15-22/3/41.

----* * * * *

OPINION

=====

by

Eric C. Williams

Reasoning varies in its methods and conclusions with the mentality of the thinker. Christians have assured me that simply by observing the world, the stars and Man the existence of a God is self-evident. I cannot see that. At once there are two different conclusions. I append this observation because I wish to throttle all accusations of dogmatism that may be laid against me. Most things we argue about boil down to matters of opinion and all that follows is an opinion - nothing more.

I dislike profit making, I abhor organised religion, I denounce nationalism, empirism, royalty, I resent private ownership of newspapers, of shipping, of factories producing essential commodities. There are a thousand things in this world that seem unreasonable to me: plainly irrational. I have reasons for these dislikes, yet I realise that others see an entirely different view of all these things. There is no absolute truth about these man-made matters, only one criterion on which to judge them - "Is such and such a thing beneficial to the whole of Mankind?" Some will call to doubt the soundness of this basis, but I set it down as the yardstick with which I measure the institutes of Man.

This is my creed. It is socialism, it is christianity, it is part of a thousand creeds, but it is more wholesome, impatient than any of them.

I think the world is going the wrong way about the whole of living. Nothing short of a world reorganisation of Man's mentality will satisfy me. I would sweep every boundary line from his mind, every niggardly preoccupation that clutters up his mind and set him working for an ideal of Universe conquest. Every action and

thought carried out by Man I would have towards a consummation of that plan which ultimately would make this world a world of vigorous, constructive minds.

"Construction": there you have the essence of my desires! How forlornly are the nuclei of construction scattered about this world! Conscious aim for lasting peace, mental development, happiness and unity are nowhere found linked about this planet. All we have are a number of countries ploughing through life, holding fast their slipping grips on the miserable joys they hold; holding out for themselves against hordes of aliens struggling with the same preoccupation. The present would be good enough if only they could hold that precarious moment free from outside interference. But this is stagnation, the loss of all fire in imagination. It is not good enough!

This sounds like a voice crying out "Utopia" in the wilderness, but by no means am I alone. Every mind has a longing for security, but very few have the boldness to face the facts of this vast mental clear-up which must take place if they are to attain security.

Security in the shape of profit making must disappear. That is a form of self-preservation which is irrevocably anti-social in that it puts man against man in a fight over things far too small for his attention. Man was not made to worry over the shortest cut to make money. How footling and narrow an object in life, yet it is all we are educated for! How small a life to struggle for a home and a fireside, and how weak of us to be content with that! Millions think they have reached the apex of existence when they have secured a house and a wife and child. Their whole brain and body have been directed solely to this incidental side of life. Their work has not been for the world but for their own miserable ends of a home, a bed and a wife. This, no matter what you say, I hold to be the result of a world woefully misconstrued in the object of life. The aim of life has been misrepresented and warped to a struggle of man against man instead of Man against the Universe. The world goes about life in the wrong spirit; confidence is gone, brother service has gone down the drain, washed out by the narrow theories of business men, politicians, patriots and militarists. Christians still cling on to the right idea but they hold it only by wrapping it up in a hocus-pocus of mysticism abhorrent to a free mind. In Russia the common mind was seized by this spirit of the building up of mind and matter, but slowly it is being throttled by militarists and profit-makers. God knows where it is at present,

Everywhere people see the object of life through ill-cut prisms, which prevent any real conception of what lies ahead. We need an education which clears the view; shows the oneness of Man, his rise from fear and hunting to great mental heights. People must be made to feel part of a huge march upward from mental darkness to mental light. The man driving a refuse trolley must feel that his job is as significant as that of the greatest surgeon. A boiler maker must visualise the part he plays in the world advance. Yellow, black, white and brown races must forget their footling differences of colour. It could be done; all of it could be achieved if every man gave his mind to it. It needs abstraction from one's own ends, a far higher goal. Surely Man has this in him.

Good Lord! I groan in final exasperation - what might we do if only we were not so damned perverse!

Radio
.....

Always it lies that smooth and pleasant voice
That eddies out at any hour. One voice
From many lands in many tongues for all
The world to hear and have its fine sense dwarfed
And twisted, bodices and mind made crotin
And dividends and glory magnified.

W.G.Harris
.....

THE... ROAD... TO... FAME...

by... D.R.SMITH...

---+---

RECAPITULATION:- A band of the most virile characters of science-fiction have left the City of Waiting to attempt the Pilgrimage to the Hall of Immortal Fame. Professor Challenger has the map which has been given them, and with him are Lord John Roxton, Malone, Professor Summerlee, Dick Seaton and his enemy Duquesne, Kinnison - the Gray Lensman, Arcot Morey & Wade, Aarn Munro, Tarzan & John Carter, Dr.Bird, Commander John Hanson, Jimmy Atkill, Hawk Carse & his servant Friday, Gregg Haljan, Sergeant Walpole, Cossar, & Clarence - the American Idea of the Young English Aristocrat. They have surmounted the Precipice of Public Ridicule and forced their way along a pass in the Mountains of Contempt in the teeth of the High Wind of Carping Criticism at the loss to the party of Dr.Bird. They are proceeding along a deep gorge when a chance remark from Clarence is taken up by the echoes and amplified and re-amplified into a colossal cacophony of jeering laughter.

Part III

The shattering laughter died away gradually into dying ripples of sardonic mirth far away in the lower peaks and the noise-numbed minds of the Pilgrims rapidly threw off the mere physical effects. The psychological effect was more dangerous: vast though the egoisms of the party, sturdy though their belief and knowledge that they themselves were perfect, something in that vast torrent of ridicule had penetrated the armour of each and had given rise to tormenting doubts in his supreme greatness. Mingled fear and rage at this novel feeling of inferiority struggled for outlet in minds which never before had thought to question their own greatness. The strongest seemed to have lost their backbone and to be crumpling like snowmen in the sun, the weaker seemed ready to burst into weak womanish tears - in fact two were squirming on the ground, red-faced, hugging their sides, furiously biting their lower lips in an attempt at restraint. Kinnison tried to find the courage to lend to them as he bent over them and said softly, brokenly, "Cheer up! Try to - try to bear it."

"I'm alright" grunted Clarence through his teeth; "So'm I" said Atkill tightly, but the effort of speaking was too much for them, their self-restraint collapsed completely - and suddenly they were laughing as men had never laughed before, howling and shrieking in a very paroxysm of mirth as they collapsed on the floor the better to laugh. The gales of laughter ran up into the monstrous sounding boards of the cliffs and the mountains rocked and shook their sides in monstrous glee.

"Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-!" bellowed the mountains, peaks, cliffs, crags and crannies, and "ha-ha-ha-ha-ho-ho-ho-ho-ho-hehehehehehehe!" wept and snorted and gurgled and howled Clarence and Atkill, tears streaming from under their closed eyelids as they writhed in uncontrollable mirth. Around them their fellow-pilgrims, all thoughts of their momentary weakness swept away in a wave of indignation, cursed them with the complete thoroughness and vivid imagery to be expected of such mighty minds - which added another factor to the din and increased the volume of the gargantuan guffaws. The end did not come until Clarence and Atkill had literally laughed themselves senseless and lay in a blissful stupor while the noise died down.

When all was still once more the party moved off again cautiously, the pros- trate pair recovering in time to stagger weakly along behind, still unavoidably sniggering under their breath at times but quenching themselves whenever they felt their control slipping by dipping their heads in the ice-cold water of the river. In this way they managed to avoid any further incidents until the opening out of the gorge had caused the echoes to be reduced to normal proportions, and so came towards

the evening out of the main mass of the mountains to a camp-site overlooking a drop to the foot-hills. These were amazingly rugged, crossed this way and that by deep narrow valleys that constituted a formidable maze. Immediately before them a wide deep valley slashed through the jungle, running arrow-straight to the horizon with a river a silver streak along its centre.

"That appears almost suspiciously convenient," commented Cossar as the leaders of the party surveyed the scene while Friday, Clarence, and Atkill (the only persons who did not consider themselves leaders) cheerfully set about making camp.

"Your suspicions are well-justified my friend," said Professor Challenger, unrolling his map with an air of importance. "This remarkable natural conformation is here aptly termed a maze, the Maze of Possible Plots, and the canyon before us is termed the One and Only. Unfortunately it is barred towards its far end by an enclosure inhabited by what is here described as the Monster of Good Taste. A note describes this beast as extremely ferocious, quite uncontrollable, and resolutely opposed to the passage of anyone through his domain. In view of the fact that the composer of this map has, as we have seen, a tendency rather to under-rate difficulties than otherwise, we shall do well to consider the possibility of making a detour through the Maze." And for once there was no voice raised in disagreement of this point.

* * * * *

The disagreement started the next day when the Pilgrims went into committee to decide the best route through the Maze, and after the first hour there was never at any moment of the day less than six views being put forward at the same time with the full power of the lungs of their proposers. Towards nightfall - when few could raise more than a throaty whisper of contempt for the intelligence of their fellows - Clarence, who with Atkill had appeared to take the view that the whole thing was put on for their amusement, made an important contribution.

"Well, old things," he said, "there's only one way out of the bally impasse. We shall have to jolly well agree to disagree, what? I mean to say, separate into parties of chaps all with more or less the same ideas on this aggrivatin' question and each lot tool off on its own, and try to meet on the other bloomin' side. Pretty grim for those that are wrong, but what I say is, serves them right. "What?"

The suggestion was the first of the day to meet with the full commendation of the whole of the party. It did not seem quite so reasonable in the morning when tempers had cooled somewhat, and such awkward facts as that there existed only one map were fully realised, but there were very few of the party capable of admitting that they might be wrong and someone else right. So they all had a last long scrutiny at the map, making such notes as they thought would be necessary to assist memory, and set off down into the main valley from which each party would branch off in turn.

The band under the nominal leadership of Professor Challenger (still in possession of the map) was the first to branch off, and included Cossar and Sergeant Walpole in addition to the Professor's three associates. In spite of their stubborn individuality many of the others watched them go out of sight down the canyon of their choice with a certain wistfulness, as if conscious of the folly of splitting up the party, and did not move on until the boom of Challenger's voice disputing with Summerlee the geology of the Maze had finally died away.

They moved in silence now, each concentrating on counting the number of side canyons passed in order to know when to strike off according to his own particular plan. Tarzan and John Carter were the first to go, fording the shallow river to an opening on the left; Hawk Carse led Friday up the next to the right; Duquesne, on his own, dropped behind and slipped away furtively, unnoticed by the others; a melange consisting of Aarn Munro, Gregg Haljan and Commander John Hanson essayed a broad and inviting opening; Seaton and Kinnison with superior smiles strode confid-

ently up a narrow and most uninviting one; and Jimmy Atkill and his boon companion Clarence selected one of a five way junction on an "Feny-meeny-miny-mo-out-you-go" formula, to sed up to confirm the result, and then took a dislike to the selection and headed up another. Arcot, Morey and Wade continued for some time afterwards up the main valley, having worked out that the later they branched off the shorter would be the detour.

Their adventures were a fair sample of those enjoyed by the remainder of the Pilgrims. At the very first bend where they paused in indecision and sought the aid of the compass they found that a strong local effect made it useless, while the narrow strip of sky at the top of the two hundred foot canyon offered no guidance either. None of them was so primitive as to possess a sense of direction, and after following the directions derived from memory for about ten miles of hard going with some fifteen branches and side openings to the mile they had to confess that they were completely lost.

In spite of the difficulty of their position it would be an exaggeration to say that they were alarmed. Their combined genius (or luck, as envious persons would term it) had pulled them out of so many incredible predicaments already that they were confident all would be well. Even when they camped at nightfall by the side of a little pool and found that, having no matches, the combined genius of the party could not think of a way to light a fire, they were more annoyed than perturbed. Arcot and Morey worked their annoyance off on Wade, saying that as the chemist of the party fire, being a chemical change, came under his jurisdiction. Wade's language in replying to this unfairness was little short of the temperature required to cause the pile of brushwood to burst into spontaneous combustion.

The ground that night seemed particularly hard to sleep on, and it did not improve on subsequent nights. The days of wandering more or less aimlessly along the interminable detours and windings of the vast Maze were days in which irritation gradually gave way to despair at the futility of it all, until their emergence on the morning of the fourth day into the broad straight valley of the One and Only came as a wonderful relief.

"Personally," said Arcot, and it was the first time any of the three had spoken to each other for two days, "I don't give a damn whether we've circumnavigated the Monster or not. I'm definitely not going back into that Maze again." And the other two agreed that it was the first sensible thing that Arcot had said for a long time, and, more or less united again, the three made their way up the One and Only.

Towards evening they came to a place where the level of the valley floor rose sharply for perhaps fifty feet. At the foot of the rise the broad shallow river stopped, its end being marked by a flat leisurely whirlpool as if the water flowed underground. It seemed a suitable place to spend the night and they were drawing near a likely looking level space when they were set back on their heels by the sudden appearance round a boulder of a bear.

It was not a particularly large bear as bears go, but it was large enough to startle a group of brilliant young scientists who had unfortunately left zoology out of their learning. While they went into a huddle to try to recollect ways of distinguishing friendly bears from dangerous bears this one approached to within a few feet of them, where it sat back on its haunches and regarded them thoughtfully.

"I wouldn't go much farzer if I were you" it said in a matter-of-fact tone as one yielding disinterested information.

"It talks!"

"Course I talk. I'm Johnny Black, who are you?"

"My name's Arcot, Richard Arcot," said that gentleman with poorly assumed carelessness. "And these are my friends, Morey and Wade. Perhaps" - he laughed a little at the absurdity of the word - "perhaps you've heard of us?"

"Werr..." said Johnny cautiously. "How did you get here?"

Arcot unslung his rucksack, set it on the ground, and sat with his back resting comfortably against it before beginning the story of the voyage to date. Johnny listened to it very intently, thoughtfully placing himself to the leeward of the humans, and afterwards, in reply to Arcot's question, explained how he had got there himself. He had arrived at the City of Waiting as had the others, but found that it was rather dull for him there and had struck off for himself into the hills. He had detected slight evidences of someone having struck out that way before, and had followed the faint tracks out of curiosity. His claws made him something of a climber, and he had worked his way up the Precipice of Public Ridicule, and though he had then lost all signs of the route he had continued on across the mountains. He had been exploring the Maze for months, living off the country as was natural to him, and thought that eventually he could master it.

"But what's wrong with going straight on?" asked Arcot cunningly.

"Nozzing, excep' zat in about an hour you come to an open space occupied by a most disagreeable anima'. I tried to sneak zrough once and the wretched zing - it's somesing like a burr on'y more so - caught me and lifted me a hundred yards with one toss. I go back now and zen to heave a rock at it, but it's always awake. I don' rike it - it isn't natura' - why, it eats rock!"

"Tough, eh?" murmured Wade thoughtfully. "Anyway, we'll have a look at it tomorrow. Me for a meal and about ten hours sleep at the moment."

Morey was the first out of the tent the next morning, and his amazed hail brought the other two out very quickly. There was reason for surprise, for grouped around within a quarter-mile radius were the tents of the rest of the party with the yawning occupants staring round in mutual amazement. Evidently they had drifted up singly after dark and pitched their tents in ignorance of their neighbours.

The Pilgrims were thus once more able to assemble for breakfast together, and though all were very reticent over the details of their wanderings it was clear that all were glad to be back together again and out of the Maze. Moreover all were equally convinced that it would be better to try to force a passage past the Monster at all costs rather than wander miserably about in the Maze until their stock of synthetic foods gave out. Of course, none then knew anything about the Monster - the account given by the Arcot party was considered to be quite invalidated by the obviously absurd idea of a talking bear, and even the appearance of Johnny himself did not cause anyone to believe in his story of a giant bull browsing on rock.

"I won't argue," said Johnny with the amicability of one who knew that he was right. "You just come have a rook-see for yourselves, and I bet you be glad to try ze Maze again."

An hour or so later the sceptics came over the top of a little ridge and looked down on a smooth-floored area a hundred feet below them which stretched the entire three hundred yard width of the valley and was twice as long. The drop below them was almost perpendicular and the side walls of the canyon here were overhanging. In the exact centre of the open space was lying the Monster of Good Taste.

In form it was a bull, a bull of bulls for it was quite twelve feet from nose to the root of its tail and extremely massively built. It seemed too heavily muscled to be quite real as it lay there with its back towards them, its hooves drawn up under it statuesquely, the straight upward sweep of yard-long needle-sharp horns appallingly visible on its wide forehead. Even at the distance from which the Pilgrims saw it they felt the superb dominance it radiated from every proud line of its figure and the subdued menace of its leashed fury.

"You see?" said Johnny softly, and the rest of the party nodded thoughtfully.

"But it doesn't seem very wakeful," said Gregg Haljan with characteristic

naivete. "Perhaps it's asleep, and if so we might be able to sneak past. I'm going to have a go."

He climbed stealthily down the short cliff, which was rugged enough to make descent quite simple, and began advancing cautiously outwards and sideways, to give the Monster as wide a clearance as possible. He was perhaps eighty yards out when it suddenly heaved itself to its feet, and as he froze, watching it, the great bull pawed the ground nervously, hesitated dubiously for a moment, then wheeled with a thunderous bellow and charged with tremendous speed straight towards the trespasser. A very few seconds later Haljan was back with his friends again and the Monster, whose tremendous upward slash of those formidable horns had missed by half-an-inch, was registering rage and disappointment most vividly.

"You see?" said Johnny. "A most unreasonable zing. After aw, what does it matter to him whether we get across or not?"

Whether the Monster heard and understood or not is debatable, but it retorted most effectively by suddenly gouging out a huge lump of solid rock with its fragile-seeming horns and tossing it clean up the hundred foot cliff into the middle of the party. While most of them were dodging and cursing rebounding stones the animal snuffled amongst the rubble it had dislodged, found a small piece to its liking which it crunched up with great satisfaction, and then trotted back to the centre of its precious lebensraum snorting belligerently.

"Those horns!" cried Wade excitedly. "They must be lux!"

"Relux - they're opaque," corrected Arcot.

"I never could remember which was which." said Wade apologetically.

"Lux and relux are two materials made by condensing light into matter, and are thus extremely strong," explained Arcot patronisingly.

"Whaddya mean, condensing light into matter, and why thus extremely strong?" enquired someone in the background. Arcot chose to ignore this question in favour of one by Atkill, who said:-

"In that case what is old Grumpy stropping his horns up on now?"

The Monster was indeed busily engaged in sharpening his horns by wiping them to and fro on a lump of stuff in the centre of the arena, testing the point by digging it into the solid rock of the floor.

"Cosmium" said Arcot promptly. "Made by condensing cosmic rays."

At this point Duquesne said nastily "Well, Tarzan, you've been telling us every night of the terrific battles you've fought and won with the denizens of the jungle, and you've been waving that pig-sticker of yours about and saying what you'd do to any animal which attacked us. Now's your chance to go and do your stuff. What are you waiting for?"

Tarzan looked very thoughtful and said nothing. But he had tended to monopolise the conversation at night with stories of his valour, thereby annoying the rest of the Pilgrims who wanted to monopolise the conversation with stories of their valour, and so there were not lacking jibing voices to support Duquesne until they infuriated him into descending to the arena. Lord John Roxton called after him, telling him not to be a fathead, but he took no notice, and a rather subdued band saw him drop boldly onto the floor of the arena. Atkill and Clarence were the only ones not filled with a presentiment of tragedy, for they had left mysteriously a minute before, chuckling over some idea of their own which seemed to please them mightily.

For a short time the Monster eyed the steady advance of the alert Tarzan with the affronted air of a schoolmaster confronted with an unexampled piece of cheek on the part of a boy he has just seriously warned; it snorted and pawed the ground threateningly, looking up to observe the effect with its head comically on one side, and then it charged thunderously. Tarzan crouched watchfully and tried to dodge to one side and leap on the back of the great bull to cling there while trying to

lower end rumble the green-and-cream couriers of Liverpool Tramways. When the sun shines the houses look sleepy, and when a Lancashire rain-gale slashes along the street they make you realise how nice it is to be within their protection against the vagaries of nature. They are a wonderful anodyne for misanthropy.

The fact that John rejects these surroundings for the harlot attractions of roes-ensconced cottages at Rye (an undeveloped village on the south coast) is sufficient indication of the perverseness of his nature. There he is, beautifully balanced on the outskirts of England's third greatest city, barnacled to the pipe-line of literature by excellent Boots and Argosy centres and innumerable satellites (selling everything from the works of Addison to "Pleasures of the Torture Chamber" (unexpurgated), near enough for a plunge into the front line should he desire to acquire virility for his writing and yet just outside the heavily-bombed area, twenty minutes from Lime Street, and ten Minutes' walk from Child-wall. That he should prefer a tourist-hunted beauty-spot to this!

The perverseness of John is his salient feature (always excluding his jaw), and the only point of similarity between him and Eric Russell. Both have reverted to Roman Catholic science, and constructed the universe about the Betelgeuse of their egos, both have grown so used to sneering at the face of authority that they dare no longer look in a mirror. But John, being younger, is more intolerant, more completely self-centred, more determined that he will answer only to the delphic oracle of his own conscience. And like a true Sybil his conscience is ambidextrous, poffering a right-hand answer with its left hand tightly closed on what is at least an alternative.

Thus you may say that John is a young bigot. You will be only partially right. In many ways he is bigoted: hear him on prostitution, monogamy, the British government, the theatre or Rye, and you will recognise this. But everything, even his bigotry, is subordinated to his writing, and in his first novel -- "I Promised Nothing" -- there are few indications of his personal narrowness of character. It is rather surprising to find in the last chapter that Adam, the only character with anything like guts, turns patriot as the Nazi planes churn up one of Rye's many belles locales. The aforementioned village of Rye is, indeed, the hero and heroine of the story, pleasantly masquerading as Jury.

It is a good first novel. If I were a publisher I shouldn't touch it with a literary critic, but I should endeavour to secure an option on the author's future work in anticipation of the happy unrationed days ahead. There is a sureness of touch about "I Promised Nothing" which impresses more than the occasionally uninspired phrasing, the insubstantiality of Sheila and Leonard, or the callous oblivion accorded to Anne. John is not a word painter, and makes no pretensions in that direction; the time that the rest of us waste wrestling with hostile words he uses to get on with the job which is, as always, the delineation of your character's reaction to life.

No-one without an interest in writing could survive John's company for long. By this, I do not mean that his best friends have been too reticent, nor that he is himself boring. The reverse is the case. It is merely that although he can bring himself to discuss other things it is always from a writer's standpoint, and the conversation always gets back to writing in the end. A mention of the Spanish War is an introduction for Hemingway's For Whom the Bell Tolls (which, I agree with John, is possibly the best novel of the last ten years), and a mention of contemplation drags in Charles Morgan. Attack him on writing, or swing if you have enough guns, and he will smash you conclusively; attack him on politics, ethics, and especially his own shortcomings as a citizen, and he will wriggle feebly in a chair and smile inanely as you cut him to pieces. He is an example of specialised evolution: the crustacean writer.

Do not, I beg you, regard him as an emotional cod-fish; in fact, he is subject

to the usual crazy impulses of his type, and dare not go within fifty yards of a bookstall without inevitably wasting his substance. He paid 25/- for "Ulysses"! To play Monopoly with him is to risk browbeating of the most outrageous character. When he introduced me to the game I immediately put my analytical intellect to bear on it, and evolved a novel method of swindling which was not definitely barred by the rules. The first time this happened he countered by basely stealing money from the Bank; on the second occasion he roared at his fiancée so Bashanly that I slid under the table in fright. Shaw at his wildest could not be more appalling than the sight of that fierce, prognathous face, the mild brown eyes converted into flame, the dark hair loose along the superior forehead.

The sight of Joan and John together would wring the heart-strings of any Tin Pan Alley lyric writer. John tells the world to go to hell while he gets on with his writing, and Joan ignores it altogether while she looks after John. John says something particularly Johnesque and, if she is near enough she will put up a tender hand and pat his face -- just -- like -- that. If she isn't near enough they exchange those glances so well calculated to penetrate the ersatz-armour of semi-hardened cynics like myself. This is young love par excellence. You feel that only a couple of Disney doves are needed to complete the effect.

Another facet of John that is worthy of mention is his fondness for walking. I cannot remember sitting down for two consecutive seconds the week-end Harry Turner was over; and Harry himself, a self-confessed hiker, was as unsympathetic as John. On Sunday morning I tottered between them over a five mile circuit into the wilds surrounding Liverpool. On Sunday afternoon I was inveigled into a ferry trip across the Mersey and back, which should have meant a two mile walk, and turned out to be nearer six. This was due to John's poetic abstraction which supplied an imaginary sea-front to the dock-edged waterline of Birkenhead. So we walked four miles through the tripe-ridden atmosphere of Cammel Laird's southern suburb.

Remote on the cratered sands of New Brighton we gazed at Liverpool's sky-line across the water, and re-planned it. Two more years of blitzing, we reckoned, would appreciably thin the chaos out, and render it almost suitable for sky-scraper planting. Harry and I wanted to plant skyscrapers; John would rather house the Liverpudlians in unhygienic thatched cottages with roses round the door and bugs in the attic. Somehow the conversation switched round to art. Harry made disgusted comments on the suspected anatomy of Lancashire girls (he should see the pistons of the Southern Belle!); and I suggested that one reason for the decline in standards of nude art might be that the old masters really did paint their young mistresses, while the modern artists contents himself with a hack model from an art school who, if she inspires any feeling at all, must inspire boredom. The ancient Greek fell in love first, and when he sculpted from his lady he was moulding a part of himself. Unless pictorial art is gone for good, I can see its regeneration only through a return to the primitive.

But I am losing John. This is his portrait, scanty and distorted as it must be. Distorted it certainly is; John is a personality and won't be varnished in words. What do I think of him, in brief? I think he is self-centred, selfish, anachronistic, wholly likeable, and with such a positive drive towards writing that it is not humanly possible for him to fail. I profoundly envy him. And what does John think of me? He recognises, above all, that I have no concrete personality; I am not me, I'm about fifty other guys with only a vaccillating laziness in common. A mental butterfly sucking spiritual opium from Home Guard and public house; a potential writer damned from the start; a person with occasional good ideas and perennial laziness to prevent their fulfilment. I disagree with 50% of it.

You will have guessed that I thoroughly enjoyed my holiday.

When I handed Fantast over to Douglas I did not greatly care what became of it. I was so pleased to get it off my hands that he could have made as poor a job of editing as an Australian fan, and I should not have objected. So it was a pleasant

surprise to realise that he had not only maintained my own standard, but improved on it, and would obviously continue improving as long as he and the magazine remained extant.

I had suggested Broadside in the thought that he might be short of material; I found that he could persuade people who had never responded to me to write for him. Consequently when, in asking for another Broadside, he asked that it be more carefully written, I realised that still another load was no longer on my mind. I cannot write carefully; I never have and I never shall. Like "Blitz", "War Bull", "Fan Dance" and the first "Broadside", this is being written directly onto typewriter, and I have neither the time nor inclination for revising it. So I am exercising my last editorial privilege and suspending Broadside. The ship, my friends, is sunk!

CSY -- 11/9/41.

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Tying Up Loose Ends Dept.

by
**

Douglas Webster

Given that modicum of sense which, base romantic that we are, we still credit to fantasy fans, you will have read CSYoud's Broadside before turning to the Editorial. Time was when we'd thought of closing FANTAST with Broadside, in anticipation of trying times ahead. Material, however, kept trickling in, so that we think we'll be terribly daring & promise you another Fay - a "fight" issue - to warm your hearts with ZENITH at Christmas. And no "fight" issue, we forecast wickedly, would be complete without Sam Youd. You wait & see!

We hope with that issue to satisfy all tastes. We will annoy you no matter how fastidious you are, be it by the infamous "Bough-Bride", or Maurice Hanson's plea for immortality and Eric Hopkins slapping his ears down, or the Creed, or John Burke's new series, or - well, rush to the newsstands on Christmas day & see for yourself. This new series: in it JFB considers with sober, married judgment the fans he has known well, and the first to accept consideration is, almost inevitably (though not in reply to Broadside) CSYoud. As comic-relief (!), if we can cram it in, we have inestimable pleasure in announcing a 3-part serial, whimsically written, by the one & only Arthur Ego Clarke. "A Short History of Fantocracy, 1948-1960". Need we say more?

Last time we asked for humour. We ask again. We find we could also do with one or two short, complete stories, and adjure you to bring out your dead. And thirdly, what the hell has happened to American fan writers? We're most thankful to Chauvenet, Michel & Lowndes for their material. But surely there are others? Why don't we hear from them?

We forgot this last issue. In a (fairly) recent issue of SPACEWAYS, Harry Warner officially adopted "fanzine" as nickname or abbreviation for "fan magazine". Now we are perverse. We dislike "fanzine"; we dislike "fanag" much more. If "fanmag" was good enough for English fandom five years ago, and three years ago, and a year ago, we reckon it's still quite efficient. And please bear in mind that neither the policy of FANTAST nor the principles of either editor could ever be called "conservative".

Experience with a single issue leads to agree almost completely with John Burke's view, on rating items, expressed in a MOONSHINE earlier this year. Individually, ratings are very interesting to the editor, as indicating the characters of their divers senders; in bulk they are useless, for the resulting %ages give no indication of just how an item was liked. It may be mediocre stuff & thus rate 5; or it may be very much liked by some, & disliked by others, the

ratings cancelling out to give another 5. This issue, we can find only 7 or 8 incomplete sets of ratings - there may be more. If we've space & humour, we may tabulate them in Folly, but only Youd, Smith & Smith were marked by all. Of there, the serial has the edge over CSY by 8.4 to 7.9; while the cover, on less figures, comes first with 9.3 (excluding some merry soul who gave a filler 10). But the results are far too sparse to mean anything. We'd like more of them, but understand - only for interest's sake.

We have plans for a new column. The name is to be The Bells of Hell, after
 The bells of hell ring ting-a-ling
 For you but not for me

by a bloke. (We forget just which bloke at the moment: we suspect Herbert Read, but JTB assures us it's from a Salvation Army hymn. How would he know?) The idea is that you think of something or someone that annoys you - a gripe - & we provide the space for you to enjoy yourself. It's not a new idea, but, in the hands of British fandom, quite a promising one, we think. CABeling has such a column in his magazine FAN-ATIC, & asks us to put in a credit line if we crib the idea. This we are glad to do.

As we write this we've seen p.3 duplicated - and the result was good - but since there's a war on the rest must be done by proxy &, naturally optimistic though we be, we expect the worst. Also, through using 3 different types of stencil, latterly, we fear, we've crammed far too much into a page. Deal kindly, we pray! Two other remarks on this issue. Firstly, comment as you like, but don't be too harsh on "Swine". It tickles our fancy, but since we found it in a letter sometime last year, it certainly wasn't meant for publication. But look again, & admire the de-lovely rhyme-scheme! Secondly, note Julian Parr's article. The comment or reply by article is a procedure we like. Please to follow suit.

And lastly, might we express our most cordial thanks to Messrs. Rosenblum, Turner & Burke for their excellent hospitality when we visited them recently?

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Jayeff Burke comes first, by virtue of his recent noble piece of work:

"And so to Fay. Harry's cover is quite good, but not a patch on the beauty he has done for his own ZENITH. The girl is all right, but not inspiring. [She inspired several people to the rudest remarks!] The ZENITH one is more provocative with her clothes on than FAY with her clothes off. [This is sooth. We have warned Harry that any repetition will be regarded as an act of the most blatant sabotage & lay him open to retaliation. We haven't seen the present covers yet: they'll probably make the issue a week late.] ** The Story of Joe I have already read, and I still think it's uproariously funny. I wonder how it will go down with the majority of your readers? [It proved a perfect criterion of fan experience. The older fans gave it 10, the newer ones 2. But look here, Burke: we remember explaining this to you on top of a Liverpool tram, just two weeks ago today.] ** Creed of a Septic . . . sorry, Sceptic . . . I thought of writing this, but now that Robb has done it, I suppose I'll have to call mine the Creed of an Anarchist -- if anybody's interested, that is. [Arre, burro.] ** Sam's Broadside is a bit of a tangle, various bits of which we tried to unravel when he was here. The first part is futile. The second is interesting, just as Harry's article in ZENITH is interesting, though I will not for a moment subscribe to the blasphemous support of bungalows spattering the countryside. Sam dislikes the English countryside: Joan

says that this is so because Sam is one of those people who are afraid of being alone. This is not an unreasonable explanation - the person who realises subconsciously that his own personality is lacking in something will naturally be scared of being alone in the country, where there will be none of man's artificialities to distract his mind. The last section of Broadside reads like the Sunday Pictorial. Mr. Robb, sir, I hope you are sceptical? ** The "Dialectic" situation (Eric an' me) is almost as funny as the Youd-Eric mutual scorn in Folly. I like Rothman's letter in Folly best because he's the only one who mentions me. Why not call the readers' section "The Gentlest Art"? I think some memory ought to be left of the early Webster effort, and as Sally is supposed to be incorporated as well it would be quite a bumper magazine. [Thing we want to do most with the Gent is forget it. And not only it & Sally, but GG is incorporated as well.] ** I'm sorry to see that so few liked Mataiya. American fans would naturally complain, being prejudiced against any of Doc's erotica symphonies, but I thought a few local lads would rally round. [Yes, the Americans are a pack of sissies . . .]

Damon Knight:

"News? Well, Lowndes is dead. Cause, slow rot; his arms and legs started dropping off, and finally the poor fellow simply lapsed into a pool of slime. We had all been expecting it for years, of course. ** The funeral was held last week, and relatives are expected any day now to carry the body back to Texas, where it will be cremated. [That body? Still, tough luck & Fay's condolences, Doc. Those of you who read IT in UNKNOWN some while ago will now know where Dr. Lowndes originated.] ** The Denvention was a howling success; seventeen fans attended, not counting pseudonyms, and fifteen were carried away in a state of complete collapse. The other two are dead. The next convention will be held in Piccadilly Bomb Shelter No.3, according to a majority vote at the legal meeting on the second day. ** Frank R. Paul has renounced science-fiction after an attack of brain-fever, and is now illustrating for The Ladies Home Journal. When questioned, he explained that he couldn't sleep nights on account of the bug-eyed monsters. ** There was a bomb-scare the other day. An explosion demolished the lower floor of the apartment building in which the Embassy [Futurian Embassy] is located, shattering windows and crockery in all five floors. (Embassy is on the third.) Communist activity is suspected. [!] ** Johnny Michel requests the announcement of the fact that he wants to be a father. Any publicity you can give to this worthy cause will be appreciated. [Aha! A proselyte for the SFC.] ** Doc has just called me away from the typer to shuck corn. I go unwillingly, but what must be must be; the White Man's Burden, you know. ** yours ever, damon+"

The mighty Russell, now in Air Force blue:

"Brother, I am now the Squadron Shot, having gone on the range and scored 63 out of a possible 65 points. Furthermore, I claim to be the only stf-ite who has kept up the Gernsback tradition by inventing something. I dodged an afternoon's drill today by sitting in the Squadron office making out drawings and a full specification of my brain-wave - which has been approved by the Flight Sergeant, the Warrant Officer, and the Commanding Officer. It is now going to be forwarded to the Group Captain who may or may not forward it to the Air Ministry who may or may not pass it to their technical experts who in all probability will file the documents and forget them. I'm not permitted to give you details of the Russell wheeze, but it is nothing so spectacular as a purple ray which destroys planets at a press of a button. [That's a relief!] It is summat very simple but - I hope - equally effective. Anyway, the gezeebbers who've looked at it appear to think that it has some degree of merit. If it works out in practice as well as it does in theory, they may give me some leave as a reward for thinking it up. (Yoicks.) [FANTAST is at a loss how to receive this news.]

Zeus Craig wrote, some months ago:

"Yesterday I went to see Fantasia. This is positively terrific. I don't know if you will get it up there yet or whether you have already had it, but don't miss it. I disagree with most of the critics who seem to have approached it veiled with a mask of intellectual snobbery. You have, of course, got to accept a certain amount of sophistication and Hollywood-Disney vulgarity, but that, like the poor, is always with us. Granted that you accept that then you should be able to enjoy it with an untrammelled mind. I could not greatly connect the pictures with the music of the Bach Prelude & Fugue in D Minor but apart from this the abstract designs represent one of the finest surrealist efforts I have ever seen. The other piece which impressed me immensely is Disney's effort on evolution to the accompaniment of Stravinsky's Sacre du Printemps. I found this almost overwhelming and the way he manages to convey the vast illimitable distances of space is astounding, so is his picture of the earth as a flaming mass of volcanos and spouting lava. I don't want to see any more of DeMille's "impressive" spectacles after this. In my opinion Disney has put all these people on the spot and opened up entirely new vistas in the entertainment world. For instance there is little doubt that this is the proper medium for the ballet because things can be done which could not be attempted on the stage, or if attempted would merely appear ridiculous. To return to the Stravinsky piece however, Disney follows up his lava with the development of life from the amoeba to the Tyrannosaurus with some pretty grim and realistic fights in the rain in a steaming swampy forest. He follows up with the extinction of these monsters through a wave of heat which dries up everything (an astonishing picture of the creatures trekking across parched deserts) and finishes up with a symbolic eclipse of the sun and a perfectly frightening portrayal of a vast, cataclysmic earthquake and tidal wave in which you see oceans and mountains being formed. It is heightened very much in effect by the weird and metallic quality of Stravinsky's music. I should describe this as the "high spot" of the film, and moreover it seems to represent a truer welding together of sound and picture than the others, with the exception of the Walpurgis night to Moussorgsky's Night on the Bare Mountain. We saw Fantasia in Leeds. Playfully, they deleted the Stravinsky piece altogether. They also did this in Manchester, Liverpool & Aberdeen. We should like to go on record as considering this a bloody swindle. ** I have just received from Ackerman a copy of their publication VOM. It isn't dated but it's one with a copy of a picture of Odd John (what about copyright?) on it. Spelt JNO if you please. Of all the crass shortenings I think JNO for John is the stupidest. We might put it more strongly. Do you know what the whole thing reminds me of in fact? - It reminds me of that quotation -

'Unconscious of impending doom -

The little victims play.'

The whole thing I find a trifle vulgar and decidedly Pharisaical in its effort to be "different", with its "new" spelling. In fact the best contribution is from an Australian. What a state the Americans are in, aren't they? I can see now how the Czechs regarded us at the time of Munich. However I suppose I shouldn't criticise too heartily - after all Ackerman is obviously a good sort, and this strange mixture of naivety and sophistication appears to be a normal American characteristic."

Eric O. Williams:

"The whole issue was good from cover to letters, and my joy at receiving it was so intense that any attempt to rate the contents would be absolutely useless." We love you, Cuthbert.

And Maurice Hanson:

"I regret being in a hyper-critical mood when it comes to writing about FANTAST, but that's the way I feel at the moment. The last issue was, of course, still worthy of the best British fan-mag but I can't rave over anything except

Smith's "The Road to Fame". "The Strange Sad Story of Joe" was passably amusing. Youd's musings differed from Robb's in possessing some slight interest but I'm sick and tired of the Home Guard and Bang it Up Lulu. Nevertheless I would like to read a volume of Youd's reminiscences in about forty years time. In fact I look forward to it as one of the more exhilarating experiences of my old age, should I be blessed with one." /And how can we possibly love you, Maurice?/

The US viewpoint from Milty Rothman:

"And also, I completely forgot to make mention of Fantast in the previous letter. That is terrible, isn't it? How can I get my name in readers columns if I don't write letters? *** That Strange Story of Joe was told by Lowndes at the Denvention costume party. It was very lovely. Lowndes looked very lovely with the blood oozing slowly out of the slit throat. It oozed all evening. Made his shirt collar red. Lowndes was a Zombie, you know, at the party. ** The Misch-masch fable is super-lovely. It sums up the entire complexity of the world into one simple confusion. It seems that whenever you get to a certain point while considering the problem of existence, the only thing you can say is: what the hell anyway? ** What I find most striking about the articles and letters written by you Britishers is the beautiful, crystal-clear manner in which you have opinions and express them, and also the honest way in which you acknowledge changes of opinions. Most of the fellows over here have the wuaint idea that once you have formulated a creed you are stuck with it for the rest of your life. It is a partial result of our feuds, for once you have entered into an argument upon a certain side, it is rather embarassing to admit a change of mind. But the fact that minds do change is tremendously important. Jean Christophe points out so beautifully that falling out of love is just as important as falling in love. ** The example, then, of C.S.Youd changing his mind about the war, and Osmond Robb so quickly modifying his Creed is very encouraging. It makes me feel not so bad about not having formulated a creed in the first place -- or rather keeping my ideas in a plastic state to be altered by each piece of information. Basically, I'm supposed to be a pacifist of the socialist type. But I'm also supposed to be anti-fascist and a believer in pragmatism, which means that I should believe in smacking down the nazis in short order. I should believe in defense and intervention and everything that goes with it. But at the same time I see the people who are supposed to be running things laying down on the job and creating a total failure of the defense program. People like Knudsen, instead of harshly going ahead with defense at any cost, merely defending their own monetary interests, and stalling production all along the line. The airplane industry, putting on a virtual sit-down strike until they were allowed sufficient profits. The Aluminum Corporation, keeping aluminum production down merely to protect its monopoly. ** So why should I be a sucker? Why should I be a dope and endorse a war when the people at the top are cheating at the game? It's a nasty conflict. I'm saving my decision until the time when it is needed. Probably nobody is going to ask my opinion about it. So I shall continue to vacillate. /When confronted with the same problem over here, most people decided to defend the bad against the worse./ ** Ah well, by the time of my next letter I'll be able to tell you whether or not I'll be in the army. So tally ho. milty"

And here's that man Smith again--

"The excerpts in FOR NO APPARENT REASON interested me on a sliding scale. The first interested me most, but not very deeply at that, because the theme is one that has been discussed times without number by men of sensibility (not always with the same conclusion possibly), and the curt staccato sentences, mere notes jotted down, weary rather en masse. The second fragment was amusing. The third was tripe of the most loathsome description - not for the subject but for the method of reasoning. /This is DRSmith & Kulturkampf, warming at the pits./

This cheap, smart-aleck type of argument is enough to make one a fervent Church-goer if only out of disgust with the type of atheist that can produce it. [Gentlemen, we are now getting well under way.] I will only give the whole melange 3 marks because the last item merits a negative rating. [And this is Smith, hitting on all six cylinders.] ** Rather a thingumbob to talk about THE CREED OF A SCEPTIC. My idea of a sceptic was a chap who had no creed, who didn't believe in anything, who knows that photographs can't lie but liars can photograph. In fact I notice now that Robb says himself that his creed is to have no creed. What the humperdink [-ck?] is he talking about then? I think myself he would have done better to have said "The Creed of a Youth", for his account of scepticism reads suspiciously like the stage we all pass through (I think I'm approximately 35% of the way through it myself) when we have no creed for the lack of the knowledge of things required to formulate a creed for ourselves. Unless we're like some people, mentioning no names - no names no packdrill eh Sam? - who flit from creed to creed as the light and airy commercial traveller flits from pub to pub. [Again mentioning no names, eh Eric?] For Robb's honesty alone I will give his article 7. ** BROADSIDE is a bit of a staggerer to try to comment on. The first chunk fails to hit the mark somehow - too much mucking about with metaphor for this child. I am not in tune with the feeling of the passage, to my mind the essence of a ship is the crew, without humanity a ship is a lifeless hulk as far removed from human affairs as a never-visited ice mountain of the Arctic. Without men there is neither beauty nor evil nor anything else - for such things are alone created by the mind of men. [In which we concur.] So to make an insentient hulk an image for mankind is folly. It was not the Revenge and the Bismarck who fought to the death, it was the living men who manned the guns to the death. ** Your editorial was, roughly speaking, the stuff to give 'em, and I applaud your appeal for more humour. I don't seem to have anything to say about any of "Folly". "

London letter from Fido's brilliant feuilletonist, Sid Smirchme:

"Ratings for "Fantast". One feels tempted to say, after Julian's Parr-agraph & your Uriah Heapish blurb, that "the Fantast referred to here is not Fantast but another magazine of the same name" (pace, Joe!), but it was, on the whole, a very good issue, despite a slight tendency to go arty-crafty. ** "Joe" is an easy 10. ** The Fable of Misch-Masch doesn't deserve more than 7. Ray, you silly little man, why did you have to go & put that: "Moral: So what the hell!" in? It completely destroys the effect built up by the parable style of the fable itself. ** I'm not sure whether I agree with the implied thesis, that culture must, by its nature, & deservedly, be crushed by the club, but it raises such far-reaching issues that I prefer to reserve judgment. ** As to whether culture must, I imagine that any race that pretends to culture and at the same time does not take full note of the attitudes of the more bloodthirsty races, may be cultured but it certainly is not intelligent. (For the distinction between culture & intelligence vide any issue of the society papers.) [Oh, goody! Up the Reds!] Those tribes of intellectual monkeys that we, in our time, have seen vanquished, may have suffered cultural eclipse, but their intellects have not suffered; in fact, if anything, they probably think straighter today than ever they did before. ** Must culture deservedly bow down? Stapledon evidently thought so, for you will remember the problem that confronted Odd John, who had to choose between death for his colony in the midst of its flowering, or life after a long & brutalising struggle with the rest of the world. ** "The Road to Fame" (8) Here is another characteristic story by our young author, which has to do with what we may call the humorous type of "scientifiction". There are some very pleasant bits of description in which the open-air life is depicted. The writer has some personal experience of this. ** "Broadside": Misch-masch. [Subtle!] D'you know, in spite of the fact that I liked the discursive element that "Broadside" introduced into Fantast, I spent some time composing

~~derogatory remarks about poor old Sam.~~ One of them, to the tune of Milne's famous drip, goes (1); and the other, inspired by his rampage in Pido, (2)

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 'Hush! Hush! | 'Some people think Youd |
| (1) Nobody cares; | (2) Semantically, what is called lood. |
| Christopher Samuel | When alone, he |
| Has fallen downstairs.' | Sneers at himself in the nood.' |

which isn't criticism, but amuses me. If only it hadn't ended up like a 'Daily Express' leader, 'Broadside' would have been worth 8 instead of 7. Am glad it is to be a regular feature." [. . . we hope!]

CABeling:

" . . . FANTAST. It had been opened by the US Postal Inspection, besides your censors. Enclosed was a notice that Turner's cover ordinarily wouldn't be allowed to pass, but since it came from a foreign country, and since the artist probably didn't know the regulations concerning pornography, they would make an exception to the rule. Thus, I read Fay. Except for the extraordinarily dirty cover, I liked Fay. The best piece in the issue was Lowndes' epic, the one concerning 'Joe'." [That you mean is that someone concerned with the affair has a lood mind?]

Take John Michel, for example:

"I am charmed as usual by your very splendid covers. The present cover is directly to my taste as I am something of an old lech---or is everybody that way too?" [Most; but there are many who pretend they're not.]

Or Joe Gilbert:

"Thot that was an excellent Turner cover . . ." [More of Joe next time.]

Frantic despatch from the 'Woof:

"FIELD-WITH-COWS+ 18 SEPT 41+ DOGLOUSE: FIGHTING TREMENDOUS BATTLE+ PUTS RUSSIAN SKIRMISH IN SHADE+ MANOEUVRES+ HAVE JUST SWEEP NAZIS INTO SEA+ NAZIS HAVE JUST SWEEP US UP+ JESUSWEPT+ ALL PARTIES MAKING SWEEPING ASSERTIONS+ ** GOT TO BE TELEGRAPHIC+ INTERVALS BETWEEN KILLING NAZIS SMALL+ AT PRESENT LIVING UNDER CANVAS IN SWAMP+ MUD UP TO NECK+ NUISANCE+ BLANCOING OF NECKS ESSENTIAL+ MOVING SOON+ THINK PONTYPRIDD+ MOVING PREVIOUSLY - THOUGHT PAIRRTH+ MOVING PREVIOUSLY - THOUGHT INVAINNESS+ THOUGHT PONTYPRIDD ? ** THANKS FOR PICTURE-POSTCARD+ GLAD YOU KEPT IT CLEAN+ (LIAR!)+ ** "THINGS TO COME" REVIEWER JUST ORDINARY HUMAN BEING+ MILLIONS LIKE HIM+ ONLY WE KNOW+ ** THOUGHT THE SCOTS DIDN'T LIKE TO BE CALLED "SCOTCH"? YOUR ERROR ? MINE ? [Whiskey is Scotch; Scotch are Scots or Scottish; Scots or Scottish are crazy.] CEASE! THESE ARE TRIVIALITIES+ HAVE DISINTEGRATION OF NAZIS ON MY HANDS+ HASTILY, BILL+ ** BANG!! "

INTERLUDE: We have not, alas, the space required for many more excellent sections, including the Mad Scientist Youd anti-wireless despatch on being called-up, & some magnificent Hopkins despatches from the battle-field; but here, from Southampton Hospital, is -- That mighty warrior, Little Hiawatha - C.S.Youd:

" . . . To return to the bathroom, I am allowed - nay, encouraged - to take daily baths, in a long, deep tub where a body may float. I have not ventured on my reading habit; instead I exercise my bass-baritone-tenor voice at its full capacity. Wondering members of the staff approach to listen. I have been mistaken variously for a gramophone & the B.B.C. I am considering the institution of a Request Programme. ** . . . They object to my bolting the door, although I warn them well beforehand that I am using the bathroom. As I explain, there is a difference between performing intimate functions for helpless invalids & watching one of England's literary hopes in a clear bath. I am not a circus side-show. The gay widow is particularly troublesome & in many ways affectionate. I shall fight like a Martian gadzook for my honour. ** Write please, Sam. ** P.S. Can a Martian gadzook fight? Even if it can - does it? S."

