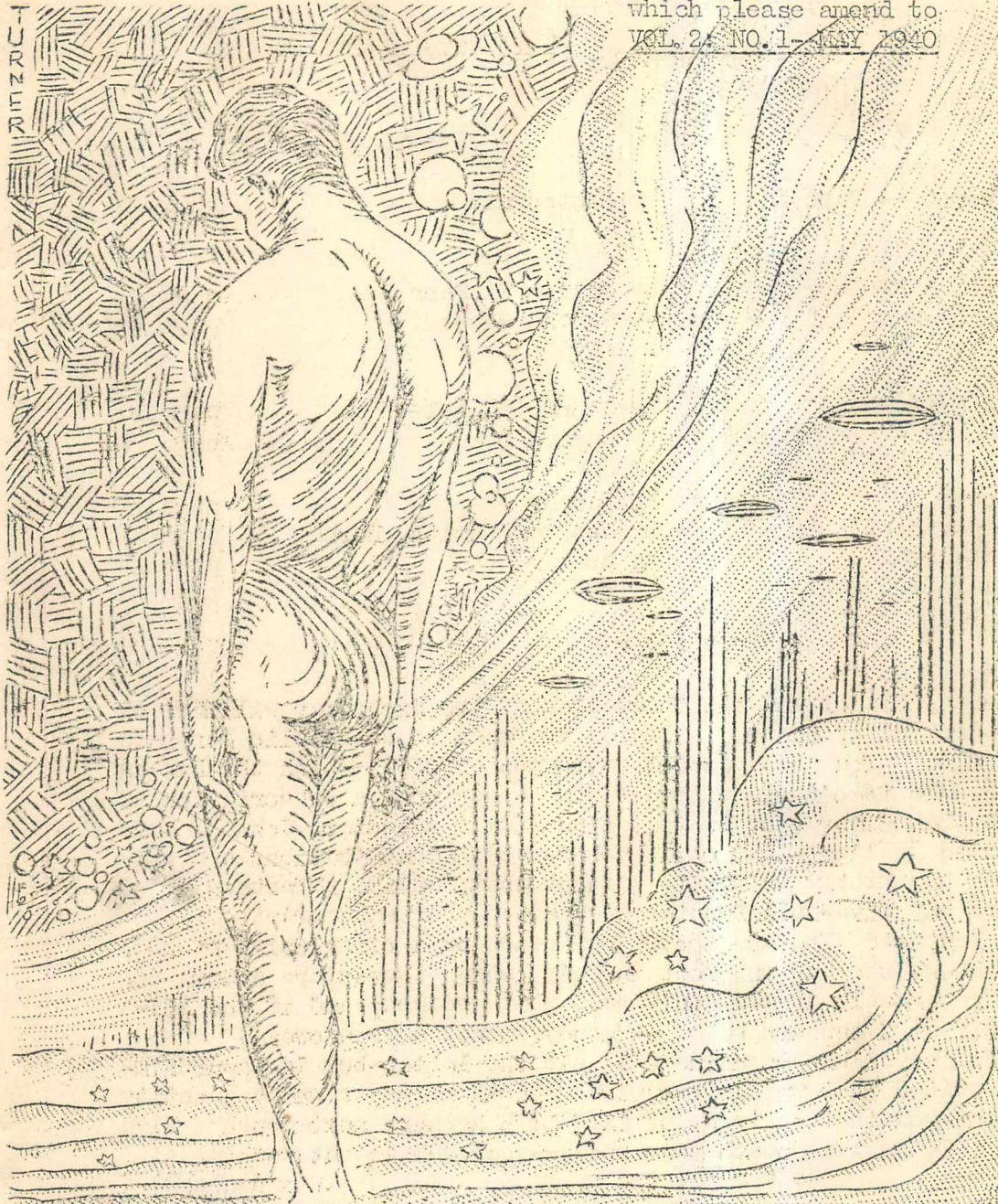


VOL. 1 - NO. 8 - FEB. 1940.

which please amend to
VOL. 2: NO. 1 - MAY 1940

TURNER



FANTASY

I feel I was not born for this world,
Else I could never take it as it is;
Should never have clung to dream figures
For whose sake my heart is now irretrievably lost.
I have let my ears grow too soft
Cradling them in tender melodies.
What a mockery! A wild battle cry speeds across
the world,
And Harmony is the dream of fools!

The one and only
FANTAST!

VOL. 2: NO. 1.

MAY 1940

a BY Publication.

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THE FANTAST is published, Hitler and the Chancellor of the Exchequer willing, at 244 Desborough Road, Eastleigh, Hants. Shares are open to the public for sale at a minimum rate of £10. You can expect dividends of 3467% which the Excess War Profits Tax may reduce to 3466 $\frac{3}{4}$ %. Invest now - or send a subscription of 2/- for six issues to the Editor (not to that unqualified swindler, John F. Burke, who is mug enough to duplicate and mail each issue). Contributions are welcomed and will be judged strictly on merit, except that, unlike a certain SF editor, we do not return any five-dollar notes we find in your manuscript.

WHY NOT ADVERTISE in Fantast? You are assured of reaching a circulation of 13 $\frac{1}{2}$, the $\frac{1}{2}$ being James Rathbone who has one foot in fairyland. Rates are a mere 9d. per word, 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. being returnable if you don't sell your product, and if the Editor can manage it. ((If an X appears below --- money, money do you owe.))

The next issue of this incredible magazine will hit the letter-box in approximately two months, provided that we can secure a modicum of paper and a quantity of cash. May we remind you that an issue of SATELLITE appears next month? Vive les BY Publications. ((If an X is neath your snout--your sub is out without a

* * * * *

doubt.))

Sap

There once was a plesiosaurus
Who lived when the earth was all pauros,
But he fainted with shame
When he first heard his name,
And snuffed it long ages befaur us.

Selah!

by Muriel Dean.

These things we thank thee for, Our Hitler --
Daily Paper six page littler.

* * * * *

THE SURVIVORS

INTRODUCTION: In bringing you the first part of this serial, we should like to express our indebtedness to Jack Speer and the staff of COSMIC TALES, whose "Six Against the Past" furnished the idea here put into operation. Briefly, and for the benefit of those who may not have read the story mentioned, this concerned the adventures of six well-known American fans cast from a visit to the World's Fair into prehistoric America. The first part was written by Jack Speer, after which readers were invited to carry on, the best effort sent in being accepted. (Readers may recall "The Moon Doom" in Wonder Stories, run on similar lines.) Our own plan, as you will see, is not quite the same. Now let Fantacynic speak for himself.

§ § § §§ § § §

The idea for this serial was first suggested in England by John F. Burke, who indicated the theme and made many other useful contributions. I was then commandeered for Chapter I, and how far that choice was wise remains for you, the readers, to judge. Meanwhile I think it best to point out that there are some rules to this new game, which I should like respected.

In the first place, only readers of FANTAST may be included amongst the cataleptics, although if the writer can think of means of introducing other characters in a different manner he may go ahead. Anyone unsure of names or addresses of these readers should apply to CSYoud at the usual address. Then, it would be more convincing if writers, after the initial fantasy, kept to strict logic, though this might be waived. Do not get into a maze of Fanopolian nonsense! Finally, to save the trouble and disappointments (not to mention the energy wasted) in picking out material, I have decided that one writer should always pass the story on to a definite person for continuance. Thus, I hand over to John F. Burke for Part II, and he, in turn, will pass on to someone else. No limit is placed on the number of parts any one writer can complete -- if we were selfish enough Johnny and I could keep passing it back and forward forever, but this is very unlikely! Writers should avoid hostile personality at the expense of others, and I hope that people satirised will also enter into the fun of the thing and bear no malice. In conclusion, if you feel you would like to take a hand, drop a line to the Editor of FANTAST asking to have a chapter and mentioning any possible brain-waves that may have struck you, and he will forward your request to the current writer (always provided that he isn't too lazy - too busy).

There is no definite length-limit, but it should always be possible to print a chapter without having to enlarge the magazine.

† † † †† † † †

CHAPTER I
by Fantacynic

There was a slight warning rustle, and the remains of the bed collapsed without warning into the thick layer of dust that covered the whole room. From the midst of the wreckage a figure stirred, stretched, and sneezed. With the air of one long unaccustomed to movement it clawed at the wall and slowly drew upright. It whistled softly. Christopher Samuel Youd was considerably surprised.

On closer examination the figure proved to be a youth of some eighteen years, of average figure without being too muscular. Very long brown hair swept

annoyingly into his eyes, which were small and grey, and partially obscured by the dangling remains of a pair of rimless spectacles. He brushed it back with stubby, workman-like hands, and stared ruefully at the long nails that adorned them.

Setting his mind to more important things he ruminated on how he could have arrived at his present plight. The bare, dusty room he stood in was unfamiliar and he strode swiftly to the window at one end and looked out.

He gasped and caught his breath at the sight that presented itself. Outside was sheer chaos, the torn ruin that he had seen in "Things to Come" and privately rejected as just a little too fantastic. He was looking out from the backs of what had once been the working-quarters of Southampton. No possibility of mistaking the city, torn and shattered as it was, with the glaring outlines of the Docks in the distance, and the tall spire of the new Civic Centre pointing a forlorn finger at the heavens. Its still snowy whiteness contrasted harshly with the other vista of caved-in houses and deserted streets. As he watched, a small house in the distance collapsed with a faint rumble and the dust eddied up in whirls.

But if this were Southampton, where was he?

It came to him suddenly with the sight of that squat chimney he had seen so often when he had been visiting this place. The Royal South Hants Hospital! Of course! When he fell ill, they would naturally send him.... His train of reasoning broke off short. He wasn't ill, could recall no illness, and anyway, why this desolation?

He had always prided himself on his quickness of perception, but it was not for several minutes that the solution came to him, a solution which he at first rejected as too idiotic. But, as he surveyed the ruins of the most important shipping centre in England (excluding London, of course), he began to realise that nothing else was possible.

That article had done it all. He was fond of Smith's articles, and featured them in FANTAST whenever possible and he recalled with sudden sharpness the article in question. It had come as a blessing to fill up an odd two pages in the twelfth issue, and he had hurriedly committed it to mimeo with a benediction. It was good stuff, anyway. Smith indulged in harmless pleasantries at the expense of science-fiction authors and editors and drew attention to the deplorable stuff that was being dished up in the year of grace 1940. So it was deplorable, Youd remembered indignantly, nauseating tripe! But that Smith article.... It had concluded with a nice touch of fantasy. Smith had remarked that with boredom so rampant, it would not be surprising if fans did not one day emulate the Sleeping Beauty, and fall into suspended animation over a particularly dull Hamilton narrative. Who knows, he said, but that they might not sleep for a hundred years, and wake to find themselves famous?

Unhappily the subsequent issue of SUPERB SCIENCE-FICTION had contained a Hamilton narrative. "Worms of Eros" it had been called, and Youd remembered how desperately he had endeavoured to plough through the last ten pages. He had never accomplished it. The last he recalled was a slight drowsiness when the hero swelled his biceps at the Venerian villain, and then - oblivion. And this was the result!

Auto-suggestion, he realised, was the guilty factor. The strain of modern life - the seed of destruction placed by Smith - and the final shattering blow by the worms of Eros! Possibly a cataleptic sleep had resulted. He was very vague about this, but Wandrei had used it for "Time Haven" so it might be true. It was true. Nothing else would explain the mysterious circumstances attending his presence here.

But even so, what of the city? There had, he recalled, been a war on

when he unceremoniously left the Twentieth Century. The realisation that civilisation really had taken the advice of moralistic science fiction writers and wiped itself out was decidedly a shock. He rejected the thought that Southampton might have been deserted for any other reason with the common-sense knowledge that no civilised state would under any circumstances sacrifice a port with four tides a day and excellent docks. No, civilisation had gone all right. The question was: had it left anything?

As he ruminated, another building, nearer, collapsed with a flurry of bricks, and he became acutely aware of his own danger. True, the Hospital was a far more substantial structure than the little homes that were settling into the dust outside, but he couldn't know what damage might not have been done to its foundations. With a quick decision he loped out of the room, paused irresolutely by the lift, and set off to descend the six flights of stairs to the outer world.

Outside the air of desolation was heightened by the removal of confining walls. As a near-by wall rippled to the ground like a pack of cards he wondered whether his decision to leave the shelter of the Hospital had been altogether wise. He moved out into the middle of the road and looked warily at the dilapidated houses about him. Two sparrows flew down and revelled in the sunny dust. He realised that these were the first creatures of the new world he had seen, and thanked DAW's deep-purple Ghu that all life had not perished from the quarrelsome tellurian globe.

He had a definite aim in view as he set out. First to the Library, to see if any newspaper accounts of the catastrophe remained, and then out to look for survivors. It seemed very likely that at least some of those who had read the article had also succumbed; in fact it seemed very probable that all who also read SUPERB SCIENCE-FICTION (and who didn't read the one aristocrat left to pulp science-fiction?) had shared the same fate. He realised that he -- the only person with knowledge of Fay's sadly meagre circulation details--would inevitably be the focal point of any reorganisation, and patted himself on the back happily.

He was by the new Library now, and plunged in. His first reaction was that he had again drawn a blank, for the reading shelves retained not even the scraps of paper he had hoped for. His one hope now was for a book, and, if the crash had been as sudden as he surmised, that seemed an extremely unlikely object. But he found one. Prominently laid at the junction of the Library and Art Gallery he came upon it, a thin bundle of sheets, made of some white metal that he likened to aluminium.

He devoured the scanty information avidly and smiled at the mixture of letters and ideological symbols designed, he realised, to help any interplanetary visitors who might happen along. So man had attained a little respect for cosmic scales before passing the buck for the last time.

The information contained in the 'book' was not profuse. It spoke of the wars that had broken out like boils all over 20th Century Christian civilisation, and of the final flare-up, beginning with German aggression in Poland and the prompt reprisals by Britain and France. Apparently after the summer of 1940 events had moved swiftly. Nation after nation had spurred to the battle-field, and the restrained tempo of attrition had changed into a quick fury of destruction. This had culminated in Distego.

Distego, he learned, had been the invention of a French chemist. He had shown the French Government this new weapon and that group, faced with a solidly hostile Eastern Europe and a very luke-warm American ally, had plunged on it desperately. The book told of the young chemist's dismay, of his explanation that the weapon was untried and no antidote had been found, and of the des-

peration which had caused his expostulations to go unregarded. For Distego was a very potent weapon.

The book refused to divulge details of its nature, but hinted that it was a new kind of chemical gas. Later on Phillip Hetherington was to point out that in the new world there was no sign of the ox, the onion, or the guinea-pig, all of which had shared the human prerogative of having 48 chromosomes, and was to be requested by unanimous vote to drop that line of research and take up bee-keeping. In which the amiable Phil had concurred.

The book closed abruptly. The Distego disease was spreading rapidly, and no country seemed to be immune to it. The air was poisoned and the human race was making its exit with loss and loss dignity as the tragedy became widespread. Just a small band of devotees were preparing these books, leaving them in the focal points of humanity's largest cities. It closed with particulars of the position of New York's Time Capsule, and of a new capsule which had been hidden below the London Museum. From these might be learned the story of man.

You'd closed the book with a sigh, and turned to the frosted windows, through which the sun stretched its twilight arms. He could have wished for a more literary epitaph to Man, but a dying race cannot always detail its last message to a Shakespeare. Anyway, they couldn't waste time on anything but essentials. Sighing mournfully he prepared to bed down in a corner, below a still glowing Rembrandt, and cursed the days he had read Weird Tales. Art Galleries were very places in a deserted city!

* * * * *

It was three days later that he set out on his quest. Three long days he had been hunting for petrol and oil, and then mastering the mechanism of the long Chrysler he had discovered in a sheltered garage. He was considerably surprised that anyone so unmechanical as himself should have mastered the art of driving so soon but accepted the boon gratefully. Now there was the question of destination.

London must be his ultimate aim, for London sheltered half a dozen or more FANTAST readers. But - should he go there first? With a car like this he could manage the trip in a couple of hours and it might be best to pick up a local or so beforehand. It burst on him with dazzling swiftiness - what about Smith? Smith, who had been the Cause of It All - he would find Smith! After all, Warwickshire wasn't so very far away. The thought of returning home he brushed away quickly; he hadn't been particularly fond of Eastleigh but . . .

The long, lean car traced a sinuous course to the north-west. After the noise of the engine had brought several houses tumbling perilously close to him he learned to go carefully through towns, but made up for what time he lost by exhilarating dashes along country roads. By means of metal sign-posts and a surprisingly intact atlas he had found in Southampton it took him not more than three hours to find Nuneaton, and only another four to discover Hartshill and, more important, number 13, Church Road.

The house seemed deserted like the rest until he swept to a halt outside and saw the trail of smoke issuing from the chimney into the light blue afternoon sky. Quickly he got out, and ran down the path to the front door. He beat a rapid rat-tat on the wood and waited impatiently for a reply. Almost at once steps were sounding hollowly from within; then the door creaked open and he saw - Smith!

"Hello" he remarked fatuously, "and how are you?"
Smith considered him suspiciously. "Now I wonder which one you are", he murmured thoughtfully. "If it's McIlwain, you can go to blazes. But no, it doesn't resemble the commonly-held conception of McIlwain and its chin proclaims

that it is not Burke. It's too young for Clarke, Temple or Chapman, and it most certainly isn't Hanson. I know - you're Yood!"

He was pained. "Yowd, please" he commented. "Does nobody ever read my comments in "Folly"?"

Smith was suddenly galvanised into action. "Come in! Here we are wasting time with every moment precious - this way!"

Yood followed him and was soon in a cosy room with a bright fire burning in the grate. But what astonished him was that the room was completely furnished and there, in rows along the wall, were stacks of science-fiction magazines! He gaped irresolutely.

Smith turned and smiled. "Surprised, eh? Fortunately my parents had completed a gas-proof room, with the results that you see. I was interred therein with magazines when I succumbed and the openings sealed. Very fortunate. You've realised my article caused it all?"

Yood nodded in silence and saw Smith swell visibly. "It's not everyone who can claim to have saved mankind" he remarked brightly.

"Hmm. Hamilton might claim some reward, and, anyway, we only had one female reader of Fay, and she an American."

"Too bad; I suppose the Americans, seeing "Worms of Eros" before the article, weren't influenced. But it might have worked."

"I hope so. I'd like to see Doc's face when he finds the Comintern is no more! But look here - if you've been awake three days, what have you been up to?"

"Three days? Some variation it seems; I woke up last night. As to what I've been doing - hunting out tinned food mostly, and reading "Skylark 3".

"Great Ghu!! Reading "Skylark 3" indeed! Quite apart from wasting time, I should think the case called for Lovecraft rather than the Zane Gray of tomorrow."

"Lovecraft was generally boring. Smith, now, had a gift for scientific fiction. His science accurate, his characterisation convincing, his logic unanswerable!"

"You are talking boloney, but that is Smith's privilege. I am not going to spend the rest of my life arguing with you - what about some food?"

After supper, plans for the next day were discussed. London, it was agreed, should be aimed at, despite Yood's tentative suggestion for roping in the outlanders first. As Smith explained, most of them lived in the north, and it would be much better to establish a base first.

There was a little difficulty about the car. As proprietor Yood insisted that he should drive, while Smith based his own claim on the strength of having taken - and failed - the driving test. A compromise was finally reached to the effect that each should drive half way, Smith doing the first part. With a feeling of plans made and obstacles surmounted they settled down to the night's rest.

* * * * *

It was about eight o'clock and already warm when they set out. Despite perfectly reasonable apprehensions at the way Smith cornered, Yood had to admit that the journey progressed easily enough. They breakfasted on bully beef at Aylesbury, threw scraps to wild-looking ducks in a stream, and Yood took the wheel. In spite of frequent sardonic comments from his side he had only one collision and spent ten minutes passionately justifying to Smith his reason for going round a blind corner at fifty m.p.h. At a quarter to eleven they were on

the outskirts of London, and by 11.15 they were cruising along Grays Inn Road. Youd explained, gesticulating dangerously with one hand, that although the Temples and Ego had left the Flat late December 1939 it was extremely likely that they would return in such circumstances as now held sway. Smith disagreed, but thought it likely that "88" might become general HQ, while not actually a place of residence.

They found "88" easily enough, by reason of the model spaceship that was hung precariously from a window. As the car roared along the deserted street the spaceship was displaced by a group of faces, amongst which Youd recognised Eric Hopkins, Ted Carnell and Harry Kay. As they climbed out of the car there was a short, sharp struggle and the three faces disappeared. Then, without warning, a glass of beer, an arm, and a long face were thrust upon the balmy air of London. "Well for Cats' sake" murmured a voice, and Smith and Youd realised that This Was Bill Temple.

Far away, in distant Liverpool, the awful notes of a clarinet split the happy summer air.

* * * * *

END OF PART ONE

JOHN F. BURKE WILL CONTINUE IN THE NEXT FANTAST.

Hints on How to Write

SCIENCE - FICTION

by that well-known and popular author, Julian F. Parr.

(This impressive and educational thesis is presented to you through the courtesy of THE FANTAST after six months' intensive study on the part of the author.)

PLOT: This is the basis of a science-fiction story, and if it is left out, you will find yourself in shallow, if clear, water. If you have no plots available, look among all the early magazines you can borrow or purloin, and take the plot of any good short. But you must remember to remove all important characters from the story and introduce your own. This will make your masterpiece a "nova" in the stfield. You all know the new author who made such a beginning in ASTOUNDING S-F with EVICTION BY ISOTHERM. Remember SHIFTING SEAS? /and REPRISAL - Oct. 28/ He managed to obliterate character similarities in the story and made it fit for human consumptives. But you amateurs, for goodness sake, don't copy either Weinbaum, Smith or Fearn. If the first, you will be classed as an imitator, the second an imbroglio-er, and in the third case an imbecile. A final piece of advice is that you should always make your chief character act in an entirely different way to the common or garden specimen of Homo Sapiens. This will make you a "distinctive" writer.

ALTERNATIVE PLOT: This is easily found by reading some kind of Western story. When you are successful in choosing one suited to your purpose, twist it slightly and introduce some well-known stf-terms, such as:-
 "bronco" which change to "space-scout"
 "six-gun" " " " "Banning"

and so on.

"Ten minutes should be enough," he remarked, "but we are in no hurry. It would be just as well to keep them under observation however, as I want to note the reaction of our scarlet foes to our ministrations." And he signed to the labourer to make another hole about five feet from the ground.

"Fourteen duaregs and two feques should be sufficient," he observed, utilising the duration-meter of the Graks, wherein a curtig is the length of time taken . . . etc . . . "But we are not excessively precipitant. It would be extremely expediate to subject them to a critical scrutiny as I require the experience of watching their reactory processes to our torvously lethal ministrations." And he motioned to the attendant labourer to construct another perforation approximately five feet above the level of the passageway.

It will make a good impression on religious-minded and irregular new readers if you introduce into your book-length (at least) novel some phrase from the Bible:-

(Somewhere in Job)

(Somewhere in New Testament)

Having absorbed the above you will, if you are wise, forget it, and start writing for TRUE CONFESSIONS. It's much easier, since no one will object if you misquote the Divorce Law, or alter the A.P. Herbert Equation.

THE ILK OF EZRA POUND

by John B. Michel.

 Statement in the daily press by the returning
 expatriate American poet, Ezra Pound:
 "The literature of social significance
 has no significance."

Our crudity depressed them
 and they fled abroad
 revolted by our lack of culture;
 "expatriates" these things were called.

The upper crusty bourgeoisie adored them,
 whispered "darlings!" bought and read their books,
 genuflected, kissed their arses,
 shot the proletariat some snooty looks.

New sensations were their dotings;
 Europe held them in its arty spells
 while they haunted atmospheric places,
 saw the picturesque, absorbed the smells.

Pseudo-intellectuals just loved them,
 noted every tiny move and sway,
 kept a record in their daily papers:
 "So and so went to Rome today."

Decades passed and things began to happen:
 incomes weren't so secure;
 even in those holy circles
 life began to feel unsure.

For years they'd loafed
 and sneered at Europe's peasants
 starving, sweating, now in dark
 and now in sun,
 gazed at everything abstractly,
 never saw the bayonets, the pointed gun.

And now no more Capri, no more the Lido,
 the Riviera, long weekends in Nice:
 all the headlines shouted loudly -
 "Mussolini Works For Peace!"

Alarmed at last they packed their luggage,
 moped about with pitiful regret,
 stowed mementoes of their long sojourning
 next to armpits seldom damp with sweat.

Michel

Back across the broad Atlantic
 sped our heroes, worn but brave,
 claiming that they were but mourners
 come to shed a tear on culture's grave.

Quarantine they passed in safety
 (how they got by Hitler only knows)
 but it must be now admitted
 even lice got in as record shows.

Tenderly they gripped the railings,
 strode, restrained and saddened, down the plank,
 anxious for the waiting hordes of newshawks
 made pedantic statements as befit their rank.

Now we've got them back and
 what to do about them is a puzzle.
 Frankly, though it gives me pain to say it,
 yapping curs deserve a muzzle.

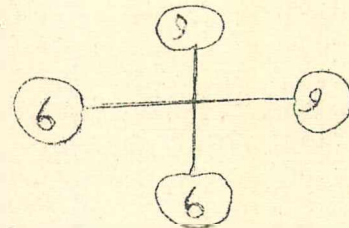
§ * § * § * §

DEPARTMENT!

Some valuable support this month. The question of non-existence seems to fascinate our contributors, two proving Einstein's insubstantiality, and one Smith's. Since the approaches are different, we give all three in entirety. First - D.W.F. Webster debunking Einstein:

"The name of Einstein is, the newspapers will tell us, synonymous with Relativity. Right. Now if an object, person or in general word-found-in-the-dictionary does not exist, its synonym obviously cannot exist either. And Relativity, of course, is known to be all so much fabrication. For instance, if you recollect the time when you indulged in snowball fighting, you'll know that if you throw a snowball at, say, a tree, it describes a straight flight in a horizontal direction (neglecting vertical motion due to gravity); while if you let fly at a passing messenger-boy on a bike, the ball most palpably follows a curved course to left or right, which, you think vaguely, must somehow be a parabola, like the beautiful trajectory of that bomb which preceded the air-raid siren by $5 \frac{7}{8}$ minutes. This is just the evidence of your eyes - that is, the school-boy slickly works out in his head that a straight line $y = mx + c$ cannot be anything even remotely resembling, say, $y^2 = 4ax$. But Relativity says something like: "All Gaussian co-ordinate systems are essentially equivalent for the formulation of natural laws." In other words, a straight line is always a straight line, no matter how you look at it; draw your own conclusions - either all snowballers are nuts (always a possibility) or Similarly the General Theory would have us believe that the Universe is analogous in 4 dimensions to the surface of a sphere in 3: I need not point out how impossible, nay unimaginable, this is. Then again, I remember a statement once made by Arthur Clarke, and have looked it up - Dec. '37 "Novae Terrae". This is to the effect that, according to Relativity, 60 m.p.h. plus 1000 m.p.h. equals approximately 1059.99999999 999937 m.p.h. Well, surely such a slip in addition is rather an elementary one for such a distinguished mathematician to make, and a second thought will probably show him that 60 plus 1000 in fact equals 1060; but the point is that he

shifts all the blame on to Relativity, and on to a certain Lorentz, to whom the addition of velocities equation is due. This automatically disproves Relativity and the existence of Einstein without a shadow of doubt... Besides that, I have taken the trouble of checking Ego's figures, and find that, from a quick and accurate reckoning on my newly-bought 18-figure log tables, he has made the fundamental mistake of giving only 12 nines after the point, when there should really be, according to the Lorentz equation, 13, i.e. 14 nines in all. This added inaccuracy has the pleasant result of disposing of Profs. A. C. Clarke & H. A. Lorentz - a not unimportant side-line. * * * * * Eric Hopkin's problem leads me to think that you might be interested in the only Perpetual Motion that works. Am I permitted to draw a small sketch? -- Four rods at right angles, with weights on the end, the whole rotating in the plane of the paper; two 9-lb wts., and two 6-lb. The 9-lb. weight on the right, having a greater momentum about the centre than the opposite 6-lb. one, falls clockwise, and by rotating the page 90 deg. the same way, you find this former at the foot. The motion is carried on by the second 9-lb. wt., and after another 90 deg. the page is upside-down. You'll see that the first 6-lb. has now become a 9-lb. weight, as will the other 6-lb. after it, so that, the primary conditions being again fulfilled, the whole process will be repeated; and again - and again...ad. inf. At the risk of the whole business deteriorating into a scientific-pun factory, I might add another ere I forget it -- Terribly funny: Two cats are fighting on the top of the V of a roof; having each dealt a telling blow, they commence to slide down their respective sides, which are of equal length.... Which reaches the foot first? Why, the one with the smaller μ . And don't blame me if your sense of humour is rather more refined - I didn't make it up!"



And now--Smith:-

"What evidence have we, the lookers-on of science, that Einstein does exist? Merely several books, of great incomprehensibility, purporting to explain what we already know, that all things are relative, and also drawing various blatantly ridiculous conclusions from this axiom. It is easy to demonstrate the sort of ridiculous statements made, "space is finite but unbounded" "time and space are bound together to form one continuum", "gravity is a sort of bend or warp in space caused by the presence there of matter". Are these to be considered serious science? Are they the sort of thing that can be believed in as the result of mathematical argument? Of course not, they could only have come from the mind of a fantastic fiction author. * * * * * And why should they not? Are these theories not of invaluable help to such writers, of such help that, like Howard's history of the ancient world, they might well have been written exclusively as the background from which plot after plot could be drawn? There is additional evidence here; certain writers have shown such recklessness with these theories that it surely indicates that they must have the carelessness of a parent with these, their children. * * * * * There can be no doubt of it. Albert Einstein is a pen-name only. The real authors of "The Special and General Theories of Relativity", who thus prepared the ground for their fantasies, can be none other than Nathan Schachner and John Russell Fearn."

Lastly--John F. Burke:-

"I defy anyone to prove that D.R. Smith exists. This will be a relief to those who for years have been plagued with a vague suspicion that Nuncaton would some day spew forth a raving critic on the world at large. I don't believe there is such a person. * * * * * It happened like this - when Eric Williams was in Liverpool we got to talking, and someone (I know not whom) asked if anyone had ever met D.R. Smith. I know only of Maurice Hanson, and as he is Some-

where in France and out of touch, we cannot believe him. Anyway, from what we remember of Maurice, he may have had a dream during one of his long sleeps, in which he imagined this person (or devil) Smith. * * * * * With these seeds of suspicion sown in my fertile mind - what a metaphor! - I read through some of the Smith opera, and found many things to give ground to the belief that this being is the figment of someone's imagination. On Page 33 of the August 1938 NOVAE TERRAE, Smith says: "The man who writes for anything but money is a fool", quoting, of course, Dean Swift; Smith in his ignorance puts Dr., but we'll pass it by. Alas for our illusions! We always blamed that coarse fellow Johnson! The point is this -- from the time "The Fantast" started to this day, there have been one or more Smithologies in almost every issue. Which means that Smith is a fool, apparently, yet to admit this would augur modesty on the gentleman's behalf, and we know from the evidence before us that he is anything but modest. In reply to a letter from Bert Lewis in the same issue, Smith brazenly asserts that he is "the critic of the age". These contradictions would tend to prove either insanity, or else the fact that whoever invented Smith has been inconsistent in his characterisation. * * * * * In September '38 NE, Smith writes a conversation between himself and an acquaintance, in which he praises science-fiction and lauds it to the skies. Yet we have always been given to understand that he is a jaundiced critic who looks with a caustic eye on such rubbish. * * * * * Worst of all are the comments on Page 15 of the September 1939 "Fantast", in which Smith, reviewing an article by Rathbone, mentions my "solidified gagging". While admitting that others, too, have been misled into imagining that my deep articles were meant to be funny - the idea! - I cannot conceive that one of the supposed brain-power of this being would ever fall into such a childish error, & can only come to the conclusion that there ain't no such animal. * * * * * Here we are then -- who's ever seen him, who knows anything about him, and what proof have we of his existence? I suspect Sam Ford of writing all his articles and then praising him to the skies in order to flatter his ego by drawing in the praise of the ungodly. Go Hell with the ungodly! ChuChu is ghod! * * * * * Most important of all: about a month ago I posted a letter to Smith in the pillarbox at the bottom of our road - I mean drive. A short time later this was sprayed all over the road by an army lorry that hit it after a long skid. Yet that letter was answered! Which, as they say in geometry, is impossible. Therefore it can't be -- I defy you to prove his existence. * * * * * Anyway, I don't believe any human being could type as badly as Smith does.'

~~~~~

### THE 'MESSIAH' COMPLEX

by Osmond Robb.

If you have read "Child of Power" in FANTASY, I am sure you will agree with me when I say that it was the outstanding story in a surprisingly good issue. But there was more to it than its undoubted literary worth; it happened to furnish an excellent example of an interesting trend in pseudo-scientific fantasy.

Even if the author had not referred to "Odd John" and "The Hampdenshire Wonder", his story would have undoubtedly reminded you of these books and of others similar in theme, such as Wells' recent excursion into super-biology entitled "Star-Begotten". It is obvious that these stories have in common, underneath their superficial differences, the notion of a new kind of human being, gifted with uncanny intelligence, an extra sense, or something else which is not possessed by the common run of humanity. Such a mutant invariably tries to im-

prove the imperfect world in which he must live; or if his gifts are not intellectual, others more far-sighted seek to carry on the work of progress through him. Almost invariably he fails, beaten, like Odd John, by the inertia of human stupidity, or, like young Ted, the Child of Power, by the insensate forces of Nature. And mankind plods on as before, unenlightened and only dimly aware of a glorious opportunity gone beyond recall. If the author is more optimistic, his New Race triumphs and we get the happy Utopias of the essentially hopeful Wells, and others who follow in the Master's footsteps. But, in our heart of hearts, much as we should like to believe in the happy outcome of the twisted human story, we incline to the view of the pessimist. What chance is there of a useful mutant, we ask ourselves? Any change in the human germ-plasm is for the worse, resulting in grotesque freaks better destroyed before they really begin to live. Old Mother Nature must have mutated with a vengeance in the prehistoric past, if we are to believe modern evolutionary theory, but it looks as if the day of her large-scale experiments were over, at least as far as the human race is concerned. The changes brought about millions of years ago were fine for creatures that didn't have enough sense to adapt themselves but had to be given fur-coats or efficient lungs. But man is a reasoning animal and not only does he adapt himself without depending on biological processes; he also makes his own environment, very different from his natural surroundings, and his own problems, much more complex than the difficulties that cropped up for his unthinking ancestors. In the midst of such artificiality can he rely on Nature to set him on the right path to peace and happiness? I'm afraid not. I'm afraid he'll have to find the answer to War, Unemployment, and all the rest of his present-day bugbears without relying on a reshuffle of his genes and chromosomes to do it for him.

Belief in the emergence of a new and better kind of humanity in time to save civilisation from the disaster for which it is plainly heading (these wonder-children had better hurry up, too, or events will move too quickly for them) amounts in my view to belief in the reincarnation of the Messiah. The Messiah of religion, no matter what form he takes, prophet, lawgiver, or teacher has always been revered in the faith that not only would he ensure a blissful after-life for his worshippers but that he would also bring about a Heaven-on-Earth. Misunderstanding his motives, and thinking that he pretended revolution, the conservative authorities have often caused him to be put to death, as in the case of Jesus Christ. But, gifted as such leaders have been, their teachings, when deprived of the glamour of their supposedly divine origin, are revealed as no more than a lucid expression of the best thought of the time. Men are eager to throw the burden of their responsibilities on the shoulders of their Gods. When things look black they fly to religion, or to superstition which is a cruder expression of the same hopes and fears. They despair of their own efforts and place their trust blindly in the unknown, or, what is worse, in the person of a glib contemporary who rises to power on the tide of their eager obedience and becomes their Dictator.

Even so, and not a whit more reasonably, do some depend on the random blunderings of Evolution to produce a new and improved genus Homo. Man must find his own salvation from the tragic muddle into which his misdirected ingenuity has pitchforked him. He is a fledgling flown from Nature's nest, and his mother can no longer help him.

\*\*\*\*\*

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## \*\*\* EDITORIAL \*\*\*

There are times, we think, when the question: what's the use of it? can be applied to everything. In these intervals of futility it becomes clear that we live solely in the present indicative with but infrequent approaches to the future and no contact at all with the past. This, surely, more than active obstacles, is the reason for the demise of many promising amateur journals.

We will risk narcissicism by including FANTAST among these; if we are to judge by your letters it has become a pleasant, if minor, part in your lives. But during the last few months when it seemed probable that the 7th issue was our last, there was something distressing in the realisation of its impermanence. Looking over back issues, it was gratifying to note a fairly steady improvement, but disheartening to acknowledge that every issue lives only a brief two months before it vanishes into oblivion.

What is the purpose of journalism? We pay our penny for a daily paper and forget it as fast as we can. We subscribe to an amateur magazine, watch it flourish and wane, and either throw away the copies or hide them in a cupboard to decay unread. FANTASY MAGAZINE, once dominant in its little field, is now a memory..

Why should we give our time to the production of a magazine? There is the satisfaction of viewing the finished product, the flattery of receiving favourable comments. That is a particular type of pleasure. But why choose this pleasure, with all its drawbacks, when time could be spent much less energetically - an important consideration to those who know the true joy of laziness! - in such relaxations as the cinema, or a game of tennis? What is the reason for all this?

It is, of course, the fulfilment of the creative instinct and, as such, is really beyond reason. THE FANTAST, like its many contemporaries, is an outlet for the literary activities of those unfitted, for one reason or another, for the wider world of letters. Some, we hope, will graduate from our small beginnings. We, at any rate, shall continue to publish THE FANTAST as long as our resources allow us. ((SEE ADDENDA))

To turn to more specific matters, the lapse in publication has destroyed the voting on the last issue. If readers oblige again we will make an effort to get the statistics out for this issue. We regret the shortening of "Tolly", due to pressing demands on space, as also the omission of various articles that should have been included in this issue. As many as we haven't lost will appear in our July number. To mention a few future contributors, there are Speer, Lewndes and Michel from America, and Rathbone, Burke, Smith and Hanson from the home country. We particularly recommend Hanson's article which should counteract our rather gloomy editorial by telling how any one of our readers can secure undying fame. That, I think, is worth 3d.!

Don't forget to subscribe to THE SATELLITE.

ADDENDA: We did have an ingenious scheme worked out by which copies of ASTOUNDING and UNKNOWN sent to us by Russell Chauvenet (whom the Gods bless) could be posted round to any fans wishing to read them. Sir John Simon's pleasantries have decreased its popularity potential, but if there be any willing to expend one-way postage in return for reading fairly modern and unabridged SF magazines, let them write at once to the usual address. \* \* \* \* \* Sir John Simon's Budget, in co-ordination with Adolf's Norwegian "protection" may quite possibly effect a drastic curtailment in the life of the new Fantast, this Editorial notwithstanding. Sorry, and all that. \* \* \* \* \* Owing to both increased work and the new postage (who could forget it!) correspondence will have to be reduced considerably.

\*\*\*F A N T A S T ' S / F O L L Y\*\*\*

This time comments will be greatly reduced. If we have cut out the best verbal felicities, or even omitted the letter altogether, please bear with us.

Says Swisher:- "Department - 7. Perhaps influenced by the story of how RW Wood (John Hopkins' University's famous experimental physicist, author of "how to tell the birds from the flowers", etc) is supposed to have proved once and for all that the moon is not made of green cheese. He photographed the spectrum (reflection, no doubt) of a piece of green cheese and compared it with that of the moon. They were different, Clarke and Robb to the contrary notwithstanding. (DRS did a much better job on the tea-leaves.) Folly - 10. (You left the writers' names off the last three --- i could identify the first as Lowndes, the 3rd as Chauvenet, but who is the Kantabrigian?) Sorry--'twas RMedhurst. "Our tame communist" is a truly wonderful expression --- may you think of many more. PS. I almost forgot to grade the cover - 7 (did anyone point out that Turner forgot to finish his gentleman? Or should i have ignored the whole thing?)

Eric F. Russell comments:- "Turner's cover especially took my eye - it looked like a gallant attempt to mimeograph Virgil Finlay, a difficult enough job at the best of times. I'd have given him eleven out of ten for this, but have had to deduct two marks, bringing him down to nine because nothing could be more like hell than to be alone in the Universe--and Turner's lady is very much alone seeing that the gentleman is really a fairy. Or has he a secret weapon? \* \* \* \* Some parts of "Fantast" seemed a bit too wordy, as if one or two people were striving to say in a hundred words things that could have been effectively expressed in ten. Maybe editorial interjections created this impression by their frequent demonstration that things can be brief and still peppy. I enjoyed the way you kiss the whiskers of some and gently lug the beards of others. In this respect I'm inclined to cast a lory go at the contribution of "Fantacynic"; it smacks to my suspicious mind of an editorial method of rolling out the barrel. \* \* \* \* To turn to our pal Wells, I found your own comments very enlightening. I was beginning to think that I was about the only gink who distrusted him even while admiring him, but it seems that you, too, have feelings somewhat similar. My whole attitude to Wells is, "I believe that this man is right--but is he sincere?" The last is very important because when we were fooled in the last war, Wells was the man who fooled us. At that time a leading sprite (rather than spirit) in the British Propaganda organization, Wells was the man who coined most of the glib phrases so often parroted by Lloyd George and other politicians "a war to end war", "a war to build a new heaven and a new earth", "a land fit for heroes to live in", etc. etc. We know now how much all that grandiloquent claptrap really meant. Does today's Declaration of the Rights of Man mean any more? It is good, very good - as it has to be to gain public support. But will it be remembered after the war is over, or will it be pigeon-holed as a subtle and elaborate piece of propaganda which, having served its purpose, can be conveniently forgotten? \* \* \* \* But supposing that the Wellsian Declaration of Rights be taken out of the hands of Wells and the old men, and be embodied in the constitution by other people using other methods? Supposing that at the end of this war the nation's youth refuse to surrender weapons, insist upon retaining them as a guarantee against betrayal on the home front, ready to mobilise immediately the old men resort to their favourite method of procrastination? Aren't you crediting the nation's youth with intelligence? \* \* \* \* Therein lies the hope for Wells' plan - regardless of whether its author be sincere or not. And you also have the reason for the organization in this country, especially



within the ranks of the armed forces, of the British Ku Klux Klan. \* \* \* \* \* God is shove!

ERIC F. RUSSELL.

24 January 1940

gentlemen---mr. youd and others of the brotherhood---

first, pardon the idiotic lack of capitals. an operation for osteomyelitis of the humerus bone has rendered me incapable of writing decently and i must, perforce, give a bad imitation of archy the cockroach as the aforesaid condition has my right arm in a rigid cast. howsomever---comrades, greetings!

I AM NO END PLEASED BY THE GENERALLY FAVOURABLE RECEPTION OF MY POEM. in fact i am so pleased i had to put statement in caps despite the terrific pain involved. i bow, gentlemen and comrades and boys on the western front. it is totally unnecessary for me to compliment your magazine. it is absolutely tops in all respects. you suffer from a certain lack of spontaneity which puts you rather 2nd to the los angeles mob in that respect. as you probably don't know americans very well you undoubtedly don't know our love of the slightly hysterical and irrelevant. these moot questions you definitely lack.

it is amusing to note that the main objection to the somewhat unorthodox style of my poetry comes from america. i do not consider it slavish admiration of you english in saying that you possess in general a broader understanding of things literary than do we americans. i recall a question of mr. youd's to the effect of wondering whether or not michel could write poetry that rhymed. the answer is, i can and herewith submit one or two poems to prove it. i consider both rhyming and the more classical forms of poetry definite bonds to a freer expression of mood and emotion and as far as i can see, it is not absolutely necessary for accurate delineation of the subjects of any poem to present them in practically literal form. i agree with those stricter constructionists among your readers who say that much of modern poetry is pure nonsense and can be understood only by the author---if then---. however i will defend my own poetry on the grounds that it is neither obscurantist nor deliberately composed nonsense. as a marxist i naturally strive to give social viewpoint to my poetry and it would be idiotic of me indeed if i attempted to veil the substance of my work by the use of confused, if artful, phrasology.

thanking you for the enjoyment afforded me by the splendid articles, stories and poems published in the fantast, i close with the usual marxist rhodomontade: long live the fraternal union of all peoples! down with all barriers!

JOHN MICHEL

The Smith:- "You have provided us with such a lallapaloozla of a Fantast this time that I must waste no time in idle chatter, but get straight on with the job of commenting on it. \* \* \* \* \* The cover, as you promised, is a humdinger, well-designed and brilliantly executed. I can do no more than give it full marks without a quibble. \* \* \* \* \* Passing lightly over my first opus with the pleased comment that I know three people at least who view it favourably we come to another poem by Mr. Rathbone, who seems to be trying hard to usurp your position as Poet Laureate to the world of Fandom. I may as well say from the start that the sentiment awakes no echo in my heart. A patch of grass where e'er it be, a patch of grass it is to me, and even if it's on a grave I don't feel disposed to meditate on what is nourishing the soil on which it grows. The verse seems technically fair as far as I can judge, but I can hardly feel enthusiastic about something that seems so ridiculous to me. \* \* \* \* \* "Extracts from a Journal" was new and fairly well-written, but again it misses fire with me because I can't conceive of anyone who normally reads nothing else but science-fiction, and I am filled with indignation at the implied slur on Wodehouse. But there is the germ of a valuable idea in the final suggestion that the reading of other types of

in a frantic race to beat the Budget postage we ignore even edges hereafter. egskaz please--

literature might give such a theoretical person as the one postulated some idea of style, though there is the question as to whether such knowledge is gain or loss for him who would enjoy his scientific fiction. \* \* \* I enjoyed Lowndes' little play on the "Neconomicon" idea, which has the great advantage that it is so much more delicate than the usual satire on the subject. Here I can offer no constructive criticism, for it is written exactly as I would have tried to write it myself. Your editorially-written tail-piece, while entirely unobjectionable, seems to have been written with the idea of making sure that everyone saw the joke, rather an insult to your readers if true. \* \* \* I can prove Burke's proposition. Chamberlain has always declared himself a man of peace, hasn't he? And he's trying to win the war, and when you win a war you end a war, and when you end a war you must have peace for the time being, otherwise you don't have much of a chance to prepare satisfactorily for another war. \* \* \* Except for his last paragraph, which seems to me to contain a fair proportion of the old ackamaradus, particularly with regard to astrology, I agree with Mr. Hotherington, and I think he's a very sensible person. I cannot myself come out too much in favour of conscription, because being in a reserved occupation I am not in a sound position to do so. I did not support the peace-at-any-price pact of Munich myself anyway, so it would be silly and hypocritical to turn round now and say I don't support the war. \* \* \* "November Nonsense" does all that an editorial should, especially as it helps to maintain the spirits, by a few well-chosen references, of one who has done his little best to aid the supply of contributions, and who sends another one along with this. Still fiction I'm afraid, but it's the best I've done so far, and if you or anyone else thinks different youse is a viper. "The Friendly Mountain" - to appear in FANTAST soon, if FANTAST appears. And thanks for the information re our Pop. William ancestry And does the eighty-space line crowd the paper or does it? I suspect a misplaced patriotism - save the paper campaign - behind your new rule. \* \* \* Polly grows apace, and becomes so vast that the mind reels at the thought of commenting in details on it. I will pick out the parts that attract me. Pausing to make a respectful bow of gratitude in the direction of D. Webster, whom I hereby gazette Critique de Premiere Classe, I pass on to enquire why "rime please"? That spelling, which reminds me of hoar-frost and nothing else, has been one of my bugbears for some time. I disagree with Burke's comment on myself. I got plenty of patience, Minister Burke, what I want is PLOTS. Hanson mortifies me with embarrassment at his comparisons. I wonder if Poe had a scar on his cheek? I had a cyst removed from mine on the first day of the new year, and my beauty may be henceforth proof a rather sinister nature. Mr. Lowndes appears to be one of those who did not think "It's a Devil" was funny, but I will not hold it against him for I do think his ideas of pacifism and the noble Russians are funny. Particularly the latter, in view of recent events. I think his practical pacifism is funny because surely, in a war like I gather he thinks ours is (and I will not gainsay him), the armed forces are working for our withdrawal from the war victoriously, and the German army is working for our withdrawal non-victoriously, so his practical pacifism boils down to choosing the side you think should win and fighting for that side. And since every man in our army today is firmly convinced, one presumes, that ours is the right, then they are all practical pacifists! (You ought to put this in "Department", you know.)

DESMITH

From our inimitable cover-artist:-- "Of the contents I think I was most interested in Rathbone's verse and Hotherington's Creed of a Tory, both of which are to blame for the attached effusion. I disagree with Phil on several major issues and hope our tame psychologists will find some amusement in analysing my somewhat hazy ideas of life. \* \* \* But I suspect Phil is laboring under a misconception of materialism. When, in a recent letter, he mentions that his stu-



dies in wave mechanics helped to break down the residue of his belief in physical matter, he would appear to regard materialism as being dependent on a particular concept of matter. Nothing could be further from the truth, as he would soon learn from a lucid exposition of materialism such as Chapman Cohen's Materialism Restated. The materialist would be the last to deny that "matter" is only an hypothesis framed to express a certain aspect of human experience. The basis of materialism is, if I may be allowed to quote the above-mentioned book, a "belief that the state of the world, or any portion of it, at any given time, is the exact consequence of the distribution and conjunction of forces proceeding that moment. No new forces are called into existence; no new factor is operative to produce a given phenomenon, whether we are dealing with physics, chemistry, biology or psychology. Every new phenomenon is the equivalent of a new arrangement of existing forces."

HETURNER

From AMAZING's prize-winner:- "I expect that, following your deserved LILLIPUT success, you imagine you have got started on the literary ladder, and are turning out what you think the public wants (and maybe it does) instead of what the Editor wants - which is nothing original, but the mixture as before plus a slight twist. There will probably be many disheartening plops on the doormat before you become (a) a writer who has sold his soul, like Kuttner or Hamilton only ghughuists have souls---may I interest you in our latest purple tinge?, (b) a non-productive cynic like me, or (c) a publisher. BILL TEMPLE.

The soi-disant Hermit of the North, Critique de Premiere Classe:- "Smith: well-written, although quite trifling. I liked it. And despite the fact that Smith, Burke, Warner, Lowndes and everybody else I can think of had a nasty slap at "It's a Devil", I liked it as well. If everyone continues each month to trample on whatever Smith effort is going, so help me Ghu, I'll now'm down. You help ghu---ghu help you - old ghulist proverb \* \* \* "One Day..." I'm not very enthusiastic. Eric Williams' "Extracts" amused me no end, in various directions. For one thing, I never cease to be amazed at those fans who seem to have any amount of spare time, who polish off a couple of best-sellers over the week-end and read through the latest ASFOUNDING between putting the cat out and turning off the bedroom light. Myself, when I'm at work, I have no time to read books at all, and I consider myself not unfortunate if I manage a couple of magazine stories on Friday or Saturday evening. O tempora! O mores! How I envy the General - if anyone feels like getting up at half-past seven, as is my unhappy lot (no kidding!), finishing work at 12 (midnight, not noon), and thereafter settling down to digest science-fiction, he's welcome! The thought makes me rather sick. And to be able to see "Deluge"! And to find someone begging to discuss Wells .. woe! \* \* \* The michelist is an interesting fellow, of a surety. Indeed, his dissection of "Unknown" in NW was nothing short of masterly even though highly inaccurate; here his offering is hardly in the same class, being of the type of Smith's latest in SALLY, by comparison with which it comes off second best. Might I mention that "...an English translation...has recently been translated...into English". ? Seriatim, we come to:- \* \* \* Smith again, a worthy effort and a novel idea. It was bold to include that matter-of-fact descriptive section at the start and the remainder is couched in a similarly unusual fashion. Unbelievable it is that the Coroner, doctor, &c. could make nothing of the letter. The reasoning is of course that we are not all science-fantasy fans, to whom such a case would be all in a day's work; but this is carried too far - I credit people, even if they are not s-f readers, with a little more general intelligence, inductive and ferreting power, et al., than they exhibit here. \* \* \* Fantacynic: a little dog with a l a r g e tail--"il faut laisser trotter la plume", as 'twere. \* \* \* Had intended to discuss Phil Hetherington's opinions at length, but I am positively ge-

ing to keep within limits of length, and others are sure to analyse the article in detail. I should like to ask him, however, and others such as Doc Lowndes, how they would proceed if, quite apart from other considerations, their primary horror and fear were, strangely enough, that of killing people. That is, unfortunately, my position. \* \* \* Editorial. You use the regal (sorry - editorial) "we" more slickly than anyone I know. Also, I'd like a return of the hand-written signature at the foot - a friendly connection between ed. and readers. Tried this month, & tore a hole in the paper - or stencil rather. \* \* \* Despite a definite lowering of value by that darned letter of mine, I'm inclined to give 10 to "Folly" -- the selection is superb. In fact, I will say 10, and only wish I had the time and space to discuss Doc Lowndes' interesting views on pacifism and war; what, for instance, if he'd been born an inhabitant of, say, Czechoslovakia, and not America? On many other points I could heckle him as well, but will refrain with masterly self-control.

DWEBSTER

The Readers Reply: "Incidentally, your Bartlett will tell you (and DRSmith) that "a rose-red city half as old as time" occurs in the 1845 Newdigate Prize Poem writ by one John William Burgon.

RUSSELL CHAUVENET

Ye Doc: "After noting reports of ships being slightly sunk en route to the land of Wall Street and points elsewhere, I'd begun to fear that mayhap the latest issue of FANTAST was to bring delight only to the mermaids swimming around Atlantean towers. However, I see all is well for the nonce. To commence with the cover, as per usual, we like it here. (We refers to the six inhabitants of Futurian Apartments, otherwise known as the Ivory Tower; at present writing, aforementioned inhabitants consist of: Donald A. Wollheim, John B. Michel, Dirk Wylie, Chester D. Cohen, Richard Wilson Jr., and Robert W. Lowndes.) After a weighty argument, we finally decided that the figures on the said cover are sisters, one of which is muchly inclined towards lesbianism -- note the gleam in her downcast eyes. Cover gets 9; 'twould be 10 were Turner more explicit. \* \* \* "The Benefactor" rates 7 for readability as well as because it was amusing; inasmuch as the vehemence of our disagreement with DRSmith's views on the future would not permit us to discuss this point in less than 30 pages, we will skip the matter. \* \* \* "One Day..." suffers from the word "the" in line 2 of the first two stanzas; it limps from the distorted metres in the paranthetical passage. This is quite a pity for the poem has a beauty and ardour in it; I grieve that you, O honourable editor, did not correct these blemishes. \* \* \* "Extracts from a Journal" could have been written by nearly any intellectually-minded fan of several years standing. The tragedy is this: if, in disgust at the plight of present-day stf one must perforce turn to other forms of reading, there is only thepast on which to draw. Today, with but so few exceptions, the entire field of literary expression is in such decay that the imaginative person is driven back to science-fiction, even at its worst. The veriest dung in the magazines shows some signs of imagination and looking-forward as compared with the dissipated manilovism of current capitalist literary expression. Doc, stop blithering. Thus the appreciative and intellectual fan must either look in the vigorous past for non-stf literary merit (a thing which is in itself defeatist) or look to the future through revolutionary expression - a thing only few fans are ready to do. There is no food for the star-begotten soul in the bourgeois books of today. Zowie! \* \* \* May I ask, dear sir, why you refer to me as a "tame" bolshevik? Or are you under the impression that the red world is divided into those communists who share tempers similar to Marx while under the influence of the immortal carbuncles, and those reds who speak and write in modulated tones. The first wild; the other tame. Veddly amusing, friend Youd, veddly amusing. Time out while I gurgle up my sleeve. Sorry, no more roon. But readers will be glad to hear that, since the above, Doc has reformed his naughty views & become an exceedingly tame technocrat. Sic transit gloria . . . /