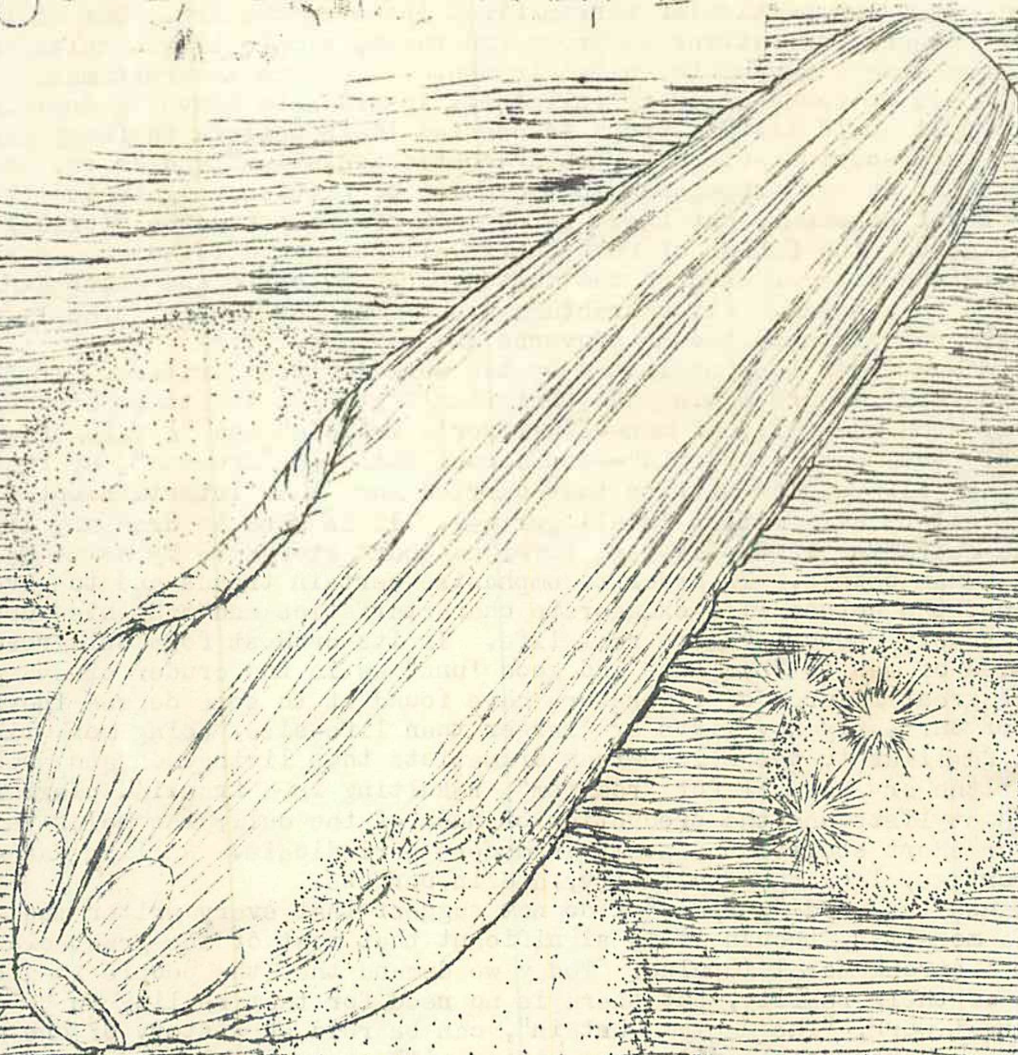


FUTURIAN

WAR DIGEST

VOLUME FIVE
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FUTURIAN

WAR

DIGEST

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- * An amateur publication devoted to fantasy fiction and the future of man-kind; whose own future is now decidedly problematical, issued by J. Michael Rosenblum, 4 Grange Terrace, Leeds 7, at 3d per, and this issue
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ALLEGORY FANTASY

Calling a Spade a Symbol

JOHN F. BURKE

.....

The name of the first story-teller is unknown to us. There have always been men who sought to entertain by recounting a story, true or untrue, and no-one can say with any certainty that any particular person first invented the art. Our history is full of ballads and sagas, narratives in prose and rhyme, simple little tales and great epics. Man has always sought to entertain men. . . and to instruct man.

Parables can be found in every religion. In order to convey a doctrine in such a way that people would listen, prophets dressed their beliefs in fancy garb. Today we refer to "sugar-coated science", "sugar-coated socialism" and so on, when we find a writer dressing up his propaganda in the guise of fiction. Again it is hard to say who was the first exponent, but there is no lack of examples--the Biblical parables, the tales of Aesop, the fables of Fontaine....all known and loved as a part of the world's literary heritage. Behind the most apparently naïve and entertaining of Aesop's fables is a moral. His characters are symbols of laws that apply to everyone and his moral precepts have become proverbs and clichés.

The form has never been neglected by the world's great writers. From the allegory "Pilgrim's Progress", representing the Christian's attempt to attain his Heaven, through Swift's satires on the folly of man--"Gulliver's Travels" and "A Tale of a Tub" being unquestionably the most outstanding--and Samuel Butler's "Erewhon", up to the present day, there have always been stories that carried more than intertainment value.

To some extent all fiction is allegorical. It is hard to draw any line of demarcation. The character in the average novel or short story are by no means three-dimensional human beings. In order to emphasize certain trends and to give colour to his narrative, the author will exaggerate characteristics and make his puppets behave in a manner rarely encountered in real life. In its crudest form this results in the simplification of men to "bad 'uns and good 'uns" as in the cruder cinema productions, but even the great figures of literature have found it to some degree inevitable. The characters of our early novelists are larger than life-size, being more like the

"familiar to the Elizabethan dramatists than living men and women. After the last war the cry was all for "realism", resulting in a frenzied plagiarism of the great French stylists and the production of much of the dull, inconclusive meanderings that pass for short stories and poems in modern periodicals. Realism has degenerated to mere reportage, lacking in vitality, and in purpose.

When I use the word "purpose" I do not suggest that every writer must be a propagandist or a moralist, though it is significant that most of the great classics have behind them a strong moral impulse. Today we demand that the people in a book shall convince us of their reality, but there is no need for that reality to be drab. Thomas Mann's greatest work, "The Magic Mountain", can be read as a story of one man, Hans Castrop, in a tuberculosis sanitarium, mixing with other people and reaching his own conclusions about life---but Mann has also made it a picture of the whole of twentieth century mankind, diseased and querulous. It is a mighty allegory, just as his delightful short novel, "The Transposed Heads" is a small but pungent allegory.

There is a tendency at present to return to the allegory as a means of expression. Whether as a reaction against the fruitless realism of recent years or as a possibly unjust feeling that more normal literary forms are played out, modern authors are exploring this new-old field. There are many different approaches: the style can be matter-of-fact and the story straight forward, with a hidden meaning; the style and story can both be tortuous and fantastic; or these can be a mixture--ordinary, well-delineated characters in a fantastic world, or fantastic characters in an unremarkable world. Swift made Gulliver a normal human being, but no-one could imagine that he expected the adventure of Gulliver were to be read as mere adventures. Butler went to great pains to set a matter-of-fact stage for his story "Erewhon", before launching on his brilliant satire. Again it's the "willing suspension of disbelief" cry. Kafka, on the other hand, uses the turns of psychology to construct a shuddering,

nightmare world of people who are somehow not alive and inorganic matter that is horribly sentient.

Rex Warner has made some interesting experiments. "The Wild Goose Chase" makes no attempt to convince. It is wild and irrational. "The Aerodrome", on the other hand, is written as a convincing story with a sinister undertone, and in his latest, "Why Was I Killed?", Warner reaches literary maturity with his allegory of the dead soldier who comes back to argue with those still living.

Many popular writers of fantasy have neglected their opportunities. If they could use their vivid and often daring imaginations to produce these more significant works instead of their present entertaining but shallow extravaganzas, they might find themselves on a new level of intellectual achievement and do much to establish the new "sense of myth" that is, as J.S. Eliot has pointed out, so sadly lacking in modern writing.

Do You Yearn For The Primitive Life?

STONE AGE STF

W. ROBERT GIBSON

Do you find romance in the Stone Age? Not, of course, the dirt-encrusted, grub-eating, edge-of-starvation stone-age life of present day Australian bushmen; or the far higher agriculture and war culture of the Papuan; or even that heavily romanticized career recently run by the North American Indian. The stone age in question is that of our own pre-history, a period in which many authors have found inspiration....Gentlemen--the Past!

Henry Rider Haggard set one incarnation of Allan Quatermain there, on the near side of the ice age, and let him find it out in a Taduki-induced vision. (What wouldn't an archaeologist give for a supply of the stuff?) The story was "Allan and the Ice Gods."

But few of these men of the past seem to have concerned themselves with things of the spirit. They were hunters and fighters and inventors. Most ancient heroes seem to have invented something---throwing, a club, a spear, ways of carrying water or the idea of co-operation. The discoverers of fire and the inventors of the bow seem to have been legion.

F. Britten Austin has several series of short stories in which he gives versions of the growth of certain social ideas. "When Mankind Was Young" forms one book, and the first tales in two or three others are set far back.

Harry Lowerison's "From Paleolith to Motor Car" has its first two or three episodes of local history in the stone age. (A book for junior consumption.)

Max Begouën's "Bison of Clay" is a story of cave-dwellers, their ways and attempts at magical control of food supplies. "When Mammoths Roamed the Frozen Earth" by Heinrik Schutz sees men into a difficult time. Ice.

Richard Tooker's "Day of the Brown Horde" is a story of adventure and catastrophe, with a climax of volcanos and the flooding of the present Gulf of California. His tribe has few survivors. The book suffers from a lack of accuracy in many ways---some of the great reptiles survived, eighty million years beyond their time, and more.

Charles G.D. Roberts' "In the Morning of Time" tells of a tribe of well developed peoples and a great hero---one of the men that became their descendants' gods. He led them through many vicissitudes, wars, migrations and panics, and tamed fire, invented the bow and tried water travel in his spare time.

Stanton A. Coblentz's "The Wonder Stick" I believe launched the spear into history. (Sorry. The bow. gas) I have yet to read it. And tells---the one and only M.G.--wrote "A Story of the Stone Age" that is as good as most of them.

J.C. Cutcliffe Nyne's "Abbs" began his long career away back when, but his recorded adventures are biblical only, so he has little place here.

The fine time-travel adventure, "Three Go Back" by J. Leslie Mitchell, deals with men of totally different character. Happy, warless, sporting, adventurous people wholly unlike the usual vision of early man; whose nearest parallel has been among Polynesian tribes during their periods of peace.

"Dream: or The Simian Maid", by Sidney Fowler Wright, is another induced vision of the past. A past unvouched for by archeology---but that did not prevent him writing a "stirring" adventure that was interrupted by death.

"The Story of Ab"--Stanley Waterloo--sticks closely to the life of the time as it was conceived of when the book was written. Ab led his people through times humdrum in contrast with those of other books, but he never knew it.

The fantasy, "Amulet of Tarv", by Percy F. Kensett, brings a character in touch with the spirits of two pre-Roman Britons, a father and daughter. Through the older man's memory he sees the country as it was.

Probably the most accurate of the lot are Jack London's "Before Adam" and Vardis Fisher's "Darkness and the Deep". (I have seen only a short abstract of the latter.) The one is put in the form of inherited memory--memory of the life of one of a primitive tribe of cave dwellers. No knowledge of fire, no tools. Carrying water in a gourd was an idea new to them. It tells of the growth of a boy among them, of his running war with the tribal bully--a much more likely character than the villain in "Day of the Brown Horde" who invented demonolatry in his ago--found his mate and escaped from a more advanced tribe with weapons and fire when they tried to wipe out the tribe.

Fisher set his characters in an even more primitive group. The family. Held together by the Old Man since he wanted company, or escaping death at his hands--the fate of sons. It is not very likely that our distant ancestors were more malevolent in the matter than modern apes--but they get depicted that way.

And if you have the right bilingualism--or are bibliomaniac enough--there are "Titi e Tuti" by "Yambo" (Enrico Novelli) and "Jagul e Pali" by Daria Banfi Maloguzzi. The first is illustrated by numerous cartoons of the author's, and seem to be a cross between the juvenile "Cave Twins" (author unknown to me) and some of the more flamboyant "comic" strips. "Jagul e Pali" is a little more mature.

---"The Cave Twins"? One of an infinite series--"Dutch", "French", "Mexican", "Engl", "Chinese" and etc. Twins written for the six-to-ten-year-old trade.

There are many more, but this should do--being all I have information on, or experience with.

They give you a wide choice of treatment--careful accuracy, wild deviation, high quality and pure hack, romanticism and stark realism. You can take your pick.

Myth, Legend and Folklore

DISCUSSION

"GUS" WILLMORTH

(Being by way of a short addendum to a subject already well covered by Ferguson.)

Much depends when we enter into a study of mythology upon just where our definition of folk-lore and legend ends. If we confine ourselves to the rigid and upright classification of mythology as that of tales dealing with those gods and goddesses that formed the religion of people prior to the period in which monotheism swept the world and do not allow common superstition and demonology to creep in, we have a fairly upright and conscientious collection of deities and there hangers-on to study and classify, which is done by Dr. Fraser very well in the GOLDEN BOUGH but with inclusion of all types of legendary beliefs. However, I hesitate to completely dis-associate demonology with its lore of witchcraft, vampirism, lycanthropy, and satanism from the ranks of mythological beings for they are basically of the same nature. Instead let us say that this is a branch, a sub-section rather, of the study of classical mythologies. Therefore, permit me to suggest a third source of material for fantasies--and one that is used extensively already--that of demonology and superstition. These are folk-tales as certainly as are classical examples, and are none the less so for being much closer to us--so close that in certain sections of the world it still reaches a raw spot. In Voodoo (from Vaudois, heretical demonologic cult of not so many centuries ago) we have a very evident item of demonology that has its set of superstitions and gods in the manner of things that have lasted for thousands of years. If one doesn't mind a certain Catholic bias in the writing, I suggest the various works of Montagu Summers as being an excellent study of the various aspects of Black Magic and occultism. His books: HISTORY OF WITCHCRAFT AND DEMONOLOGY, THE VAMPIRE; HIS RITH AND KIN, WEREWOLVES, and another further book upon Vampirism. Since there are many others of the fantasists who are much more deeply studied in this section of fantasy than I, I shall leave further discussion to them.

To get down to the business of books on folk-lore, there are literally thousands of books written upon the subject ranging from pamphlets of archeological societies to magnificent collations such as Fraser's GOLDEN BOUGH with 12 volumes and a supplement. As Ferguson says, the GOLDEN BOUGH is perhaps the most extensive single work upon mythology that has been done. If you want to know everything and turn up with nothing upon anythin in particular, read it. The work has one bad point and the author himself points it out even before beginning to write the book. It is an essay upon mythology; every

fact is marshalled shoulder to shoulder with alarming prolixity. Every volume in the essay is as closely resembling a paragraph in a shorter essay as the author can make it. Every related fact is put together. For example the first volume, or rather part, 'The Magic Art', details every incident of primitive magic, sympathetic magic, and pre-religious magic that the author could discover; the fifth part, 'Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild', details all the nature myths and legends from Artemis on down. It is a study of all mythologies in general and no one of them in particular; you see everything inclusively, but not a picture of any particular religion.

The GOLDEN BOUGH itself is pretty readily attainable either in a full edition or in one of the abridged editions that have been printed both in Britain and America. The edition that I am in possession of (the third) is the standard edition I believe and consists of twelve volumes, one of which is a bibliography and index, and a supplement named ANTERLATH. Several abridged editions have been published in which one gets the general information and complete outline, but not the wealth of detail that is in the larger edition. The same author has had many other books printed including various other studies, and several lengthy translations from the Greek. I might recommend his FOLKLORE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT (Studies in Comparative Religion, Legend, and Law) in three volumes and EXOGAMY AND TOTEMISM in five, both of which have been abridged into single volumes I believe.

My favorite mythologist is Donald A. Mackenzie who has produced many volumes of myth of various peoples--Egyptian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Pre-hellenic Europe, Indian, Teutonic, Pre-Columbian America, Melanesia and Indonesia, Scotland, Aryan Nations, China, and Japan, as well as volumes of Indian and Burmese fairy tales and other assorted works---both for the Gresham Myths Series and published singly. His researches are fairly exhaustive and his writing is presented in an interesting manner. A comparative writer is Lewis Spence who has covered nearly the same ground, but has a different method of writing and at times slightly differing information. Andrew Lang has a knack of brushing up out-of-the-way myths and things that fill in crannies of our knowledge.

Classic mythology, i.e., Greek and Roman, can be readily secured from the dozens of works of this nature or directly from the ILIAD, ODYSSEY, and AENEID as suggested by Ferguson or from many, many others of the Greek and Roman writers--as well as picking up a smattering of philosophy while at it. Full coverage of the diverse folk-tales of Europe may be obtained from many collections though it would be an immense task to undertake them all from the 'Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society' to single volumes on this or that country. Various books could be PAGANISM IN ROMANIAN FOLK-LORE (Boza), FLEMISH LEGENDS (Coster), TALES OF SERBIAN LIFE (Davis), FOLK TALES OF BRITANNY, FOLK TALES OF NORMANDY, FOLK TALES OF PROVENCE, ETC (Johnson), LEGENDS OF FLORENCE (LeLand), LEGENDS OF THE RHINE (Purdie), THE DONKEY OF GOD ((Italian Legends))(Untermayor), ALBANIAN WONDER TALES (Wheeler) and a little search would unearth plenty more. As you can see the legends run from countries, rivers, sections, counties, to cities and peoples. Of North American and South American legends I know very few sources other than the North American Archeology Society publication and other archeological societies regional in nature. There are probably several books other than those listed by Ferguson and other reporters. Perhaps some of the American occultists would have more detailed knowledge of these, and could furnish further information. I toss the torch to these.

AND NOW a few words on the subject from John F. Burke now in France. This seems to your editor to be a subject worthy of a symposium and someday he or someone else may get around to the matter! But for Johnny.....

"Ferguson is extremely interesting but frequently inaccurate. I feel sure that his wild generalisation about the poorness of Egyptian mythology presentation is a guess and no more. Though I remember no title I have in the past read some excellent volumes and one can always find much of interest in the works of prominent archeologists. Perhaps some knowledgeable person will someday write an article on the works of prominent archaeologists most likely to be of interest to the fantast. Ferguson makes an appalling mistake over the Ingoldsby Legends, which, despite the amusing lying introduction by "Thomas Ingoldsby", are nearly all purely fiction. (Oh, Johnny, you don't realize the depths of the abysmal ignorance of almost all fantasts regarding real literature! Ed) I am surprised to find no reference to Beowulf, with which he must surely be acquainted from the Laing anthology if from no other source, nor to the original Morte D'Arthur (on which Malory based his poem), and very little particularising concerning France. One feels that the "France is distinguished by several collections" remark hides a complete lack (Concluded after Delvings into the Weird and Imaginative)

"Sirius", Secker & Warburg, 1944, Price: 8/6, Pages: 200.

On reading the review of "Sirius" in the august pages of "The New Statesman & Nation" (I was in New Zealand at the time) my first impulse was to run, not walk, to the nearest post office and cable my wife to get a copy before they were sold out and out of print. On reading the review a second time my enthusiasm evaporated. It should not have done, but I forgot to allow for the fact that even the erudite contributors to the N.S. & N. could not be expected to do full justice to a work of fantasy.

That's what the book is - fantasy at its best. Let the highbrow commentators yammer as much as they like about philosophy, but don't let that put you off. For philosophy is an essential ingredient of good fantastic literature.

"Sirius" is the story of a dog with the equivalent of human intelligence reared by a scientist, one Thomas Trelone. He's not a mutation, but the result of the addition of certain hormones to his mother's blood stream. And he is not (I cannot stress this point too strongly) a man in dog's clothing. To the last, his intelligence is essentially canine.

Sirius is no plaster saint. One can condone and sympathise with his many love affairs - especially since his numerous inamorata have neither intelligence nor speech - but one finds it hard to excuse his sale of his own puppies (the locals refuse to believe that the entirely artificial intelligence of Trelone's super sheep dogs is not transmitted to their offspring) during the period when he is running his own sheep farm.

The real love story - that of Sirius and Plaxy, Trelone's daughter - is handled as only Stapledon could handle it. In lesser hands it would have been obscene, mawkish, or both.

But one cannot help wishing that one had been given more than the merest scrap from Sirius' own book - "The Lamp-post, A Study of the Social Life of the Domestic Dog." No extracts whatever are given from "Beyond the Lamp-post."

There is, of course, mysticism, but the mysticism of Olaf Stapledon is far preferable to the crude piety of some of the fantasy that has, of late, been published in novel form. There is philosophy, and one could wish for more of it. There is, in fact, everything that makes any work from the pen of the Master a book to buy and a book to keep.

In conclusion, unlike that unfortunate mutant, Odd John, Sirius goes down - as go down he must - with his flag flying. And he will live, I think, when Odd John has been long forgotten.

DEIVINGS INTO THE WEIRD AND IMAGINATIVE VI

J. W. BANKS

ESCAPE FROM A SUNSET.

In an article in the "Atlantic Monthly" November 1934, Charles D. Stewart writes of "The Colours of Nature". The article was mainly concerned with the various colours to be found in natural scenery, but at the end, the writer tells of an interesting experience that may easily be classified as "fantasy".

One summer evening, his wife and he went for a row upon a lake. The evening was very still, and.... "As the sun verged toward the horizon the clouds became pinker and some deepened into red. My wife and I began to pay more attention to the scene below. The sky became more pink and fiery, and the pink reached out more toward the zenith. Gradually it wiped out all other reflections by the mere assertion of colour; and thus it claimed the whole depth and surface of the lake.

"As we looked into this nether world of clouds the scene became deeper and deeper, and yet more deep. We had started out on a good substantial surface of water, and now we were suspended above all this, a colourful heaven below us. Far down we could see roseate balconies hanging in space. There was a red tumult of billowy shapes for us to gaze at; and then, as the sun went lower, a spectacle of fiery crags and an abyss of fearful conflagrations. Instead of floating on a daylight surface, our smooth supporting medium seemed to have vanished. And, as we now took glances below, the dizzy scene seemed more and more fearful.

'Shall we go back home?' I asked her.

'Oh, yes. Let us get out of this', she answered.

When you turn your back on a spectre it does not help matters any, especially when you can still see the thing you are fleeing from. After a quarter of a mile we reached the point of our peninsula and skinned round on the shady side and thus to shore. And I

for my part, was glad to be there. 'Long heath, brown furze, anything' -- I was glad of a good opaque place wereon to stand. That was many years ago, and the experience still keeps a place in our minds. Of all adventures by land or water, one of the tightest squeaks we ever had was our escape from that sunset.

* * * *

CONCERNING MATTHEW GREGORY LEWIS.

In the Summer 1944 issue of the US fan-magazine ACOLYTE, there is a list of works by Matthew Gregory Lewis (1775-1818). The reason for the inclusion of this list is that, in the words of the editors, many of them "may be classed as weird-Gothic". Lewis's first novel, "Ambrosio, or The Monk", was praised by Lovecraft. I have no knowledge of this authors work, but struck by a note in the list that he had collaborated with Sir Walter Scott, I looked in Lockhart's life of the later author for mention of this collaboration. There are several highly promising references. On page 87 of the Everyman edition, there is the following: "When William Erskine was in London... he happened to meet in society with Matthew Gregory Lewis, .P. for Winton, whose romance of The Monk, with the ballads which it included, had made for him, in those barren days, a brilliant reputation. This good-natured fopling, the pet and plaything of certain fashionable circles, was then busy with that miscellany which at length came out in 1801, under the title of Tales of Wonder, and was beating up in all quarters for contributions. Erskine showed Lewis the versions of Lenore and the Wild Huntsman; and when he mentioned that his friend had other specimens of the German diablerie in his portfolio, the collector anxiously requested that Scott might be enlisted in his cause:-"

Apart from this collaboration, Scott took some interest in imaginative themes for his other works. In The Eve of St. John, in the words of Lockhart, he "re-peoples the tower of Smailholm, the awe-inspiring haunt of his infancy; and here he touches, for the first time, the one superstition which can still be appealed to with full and perfect effect; the only one which lingers in minds long since weaned from all sympathy with the machinery of witches and goblins. And surely this mystery was never touched with more thrilling skill than in that noble ballad." ... "Then came the Grey Brother, founded on another superstition, which seems to have been almost as ancient as the belief in ghosts; namely, that the holiest service of the altar cannot go on in the presence of an unclean person-- a heinous sinner unconfessed and unabsolved. The fragmentary form of this poem greatly heightens the awfulness of its impression;...."

* * * *

TALES OF TERROR AND WONDER is a collection of ballads, some original works by Lewis, and others by Scott, with some translations, chiefly from the German, and commences with an "Introductory Dialogue" in verse, an imaginary conversation between a Friend and the Author, in which it is apparently the friend's purpose to chide the author for wasting his time on ghostly ballads.

"What, scribble tales? O, cease to play the fool!" says he in tones familiar to the devoted reader or writer of imaginative fiction who has to face the gentle ridicule of his friends.

"What gain, what pleasure, can your labours crown?

"A nursery's praise shall be your best renown:"

To which the author replies, "Oh! cease this rage, this misapplied abuse, Satire gives weapons for nobler use; " and proceeds to give justification for his writings, caring nought for a "fashion" that looks with condescension upon his work.

"It boots not me -- my taste is still my own."

The soul, says he, "Loves to roam largely through each distant clime," And "leap the flaming bounds of space and time!"

In short, he sees in the tales he writes, a form of what we nowadays call "escapism"

"The mental eye, by constant lustre tires,
Forsakes, fatigued, the object it admires,
And, as it scans each various nation's doom,
From classic brightness turns to Gothic gloom."

How apposite that third line sounds today, and what greater cause for his labours might "Monk" Lewis find in those times!

* * * *

Lengthy quotations may tend to cloy the taste, and I will be content to give a few odd lines that appealed to me personally as being interesting examples of this style.

This is the description of Grim, the King of Ghosts:

"No flesh had the spectre, his skeleton skull
Was loosely wrapped round with a brown shrivelled skin;
His bones, "stead of marrow, of maggots were full,
And the worms they crawled out, and the worms they crawled in.

His shoes they were coffins, his dim eye revealed
The gleam of a grave-lamp with vapours oppressed;
And a dark crimson necklace of blood drops congealed
Reflected each bone that jagged out of his breast."

These next lines, from "The Little Gray Man" have a certain grim touch about them. This is written by H. Bunbury.

"Shrill whistled the wind through the skulls, and the blast
Scared the yet greedy bird from its gluttonous repast;
From the new-racked assassin the raven withdrew,
But creaked round the wheel still, and heavily flew;
While vultures, more daring, intent on their prey,
Tore the flesh from the sinews, yet reeking, away.

Of the several pieces by Scott in the collection, the following comes from "Frederick and Alice", based upon a Romance sung in Goethe's opera "Claudina von Villa Bella."

"Hark! for now a solemn knell
FOUR times on the still night broke;
FOUR times, at its deadened swell,
Echoes from the ruins spoke .

As the lengthened clangours die,
Slowly opens the iron door!
Straight a banquet met his eye,
But a funeral's form it wore!

Coffins for the seats extend;
All with black the board was spread,
Girt by parent, brother, friend,
Long since numbered with the dead!

Alice, in her grave clothes bound,
Ghastly smiling, points a seat;
All arouse with thundering sound;
All the expected stranger greet.

High their meagre arms they wave,
Wild their notes of welcome swell;
"Welcome, traitor, to the grave!
Perjured, bid the light farewell!"

JOHN F. BURCKE on Mythology (cont'd)
of knowledge on the subject. (Don't agree--'tis a typical exam answer when time is running short. Ed) Nothing of the Roi d'Ys, which supplied Merritt with the idea for "Creep Shadow"--nothing, most criminally, no fleeting mention, of "Aucassin and Nicolette." These collections of titles are all very well, but one needs body and detail, thesis and discussion. Mere compilations of book titles are of no real value, even to the discriminating collector. Still, Ferguson has made a better attempt at adding a few revelatory notes than many people who play the same game.

Filler: Fred Brown, has US & British fantasy books to swap for his wants.

.....
Paperbacks continue to pour out onto the London market. Latest are another Eugene Ascher occulty thing called "The Grim Caretaker" (printed and published by Everybody's Books, price 9d) and a walking-dead affair called "You Can't Hang the Dead", variously subtitled "A Tale of the Zombie" and "A Story of Black Zombie", by Leslie Carrol (Mitro Press, 1/-).

* * * * *
While amongst the Greeks the idea of the interplanetary voyage seems to have flourished (see the "Wonders beyond Thule" of Antonius Diogenes, the two Moon Flights of Lucian, and "On the Face that One Sees in the Orb of the Moon" of Plutarch) the nearest one can find to space-flight in the writings of the Romans is Cicero's "Vision of Scipio". I have it in a book of translations of various moral works of Cicero by Cyrus K. Edmonds (1890), who has laced the volume with copious quotations from modern moralists. The translator says: "Cicero has nowhere more happily united sublimity of thought with brilliant imagination." Making allowance for dull translation, Cicero's effort is still notable dreary. Scipio, in dream, is elevated to an ethereal sphere ~~where~~ he meets spirits of the departed, is directed to look down upon Earth and to observe its small scale, and has it pointed out that the Earth is the centre of a Ptolemaic system of concentric spheres, carrying one each of the planets, Moon and Sun, with an outer starry sphere. The vanity of wishing to stand high in the memory of posterity is discoursed upon above the spheres.

* * * * *
I'm surprised that these weird-story enthusiasts don't tell us more about Mrs. Oliphant's "A Beleaguered City: being A Narrative of Certain Recent Events in the City of Semur, in the Department of the Haute Bourgogne: A Story of the Seen and the Unseen" (London, Macmillan, 1880). A magnificently-done ghosty story, quite one of the best I've read.

* * * * *
An attraction (quite apart from their intrinsic merit, which is low) about collecting "Marie Corelli's" (Mary Mackay's) fantasies is that it's not difficult to achieve completeness--though it's not the same story if you aim at first edition completeness. Besides the main-stream of her fantasy-allegories - "A Romance of Two Worlds", "Ardath", "The Soul of Lilith", "The Sorrows of Satan", "Barabbas", "The Master Christian", "The Life Everlasting" - all you have to have are "A Strange Visitation", "Ziska", "The Young Diana" (an immortality thing, I think), "The Secret Power" (a future tale), and "The Devil's Motor" (a gigantic book with great coloured splashy illustrations). Firmly ignoring things like "The Mighty Atom". And there you are.

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The more one thinks about it the more overwhelming becomes the task some of our fantasy bibliographers have set themselves: the task, that is, of compiling a comprehensive bibliography of pseudo-scientific, "straight", and weird fantasy. Weird Fantasy, even under a more conservative definition than my friend Langley Searles advocates, comprises thousand upon thousand of volumes. Many very well known weird fantasies are just neglected by our bibliographers. Dickens, of course, wrote a great many ghost stories. Somewhat further back, how many of the plays of Shakespeare's must be counted in? And how many more of the productions of Shakespeare's contemporaries? And further back, why don't we list Spencer's "Fairy Queen"? Nearer home, remember the bogue of the Gothic novel, God knows how many of which were of a ghosty nature.

Me, I content myself with quite strictly defined "scientific fantasy", which is a big enough field for a number of bibliographers.

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How about this "Bernardus Silvestris", described as a Platonist of the twelfth century, who, according to C.S. Lewis, wrote an account of a "voyage through the heavens" ("Out of the Silent Planet", 1st edition, p. 250)? I presume this is an invention--though I haven't made any real attempt to find it in the reference books.

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An outstandingly nicely done fantasy is Paul Beaujon's "Peace Under Earth: Dialogues from the Year 1946", published in 1938 by Megaw, in an edition limited to 150 copies. To my shame, it has been on my shelves for six years and I've only just read it. Written less than a year before the war, when bombs and gas and digging-in were in the air, it records three dialogues retrieved from a bomb-proof shelter of the year 1946 by means of the telechronophone. Mr. Beaujon includes a version of the nativity story which is

clearly and effectively written, singularly free from sentimentalism and muss. He has something to say about the motivation of war which is, I think, very well worth saying. I wish this booklet could be more widely read.

* * * * *

Talking of earlier fantasies, I'm rather proud of my copy of Bunyan's "The Pilgrim's Progress: From This World to That which is to Come: Delivered under the Similitude of a Dream", published undated by Elliot Stock. It is surely one of the most conscientious of facsimile reproductions. Modelled on the unique first edition of 1678, "in the library of R.S. Holford, Esq.", it is typographically beyond reproach, "for the type now used has been cast from the moulds made in 1720, which were taken from the Dutch type used for the first issue". The editor proudly points out that "the paper, too, is a close imitation of that manufactured two centuries ago".

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I agree strongly with the Americans who have recently announced that E.R. Eddison's "The Worm Ouroboros" (Cape, 1922) is pretentiously written and uninspiring. Mr. Eddison's sole claim on posterity would appear to be that he anticipated a phrase, of some modern fame, concerning "a dream walking". I wish that he could have refrained, in his elaborate descriptions and polished metaphors, from making such frequent references to the moon and moon-light. Poetic license, Hell! He didn't have to set his scene on Mercury.

THOUGHTS
ON WORDS

Do You Mean What You Say?

MALCOLM FERGUSON

.....

Semantics is the science of analysis of meaning. Since good writing is exact writing, based on expressing unequivocally what the writer means, training in clear understanding and avoidance of ambiguity is essential to a good writer. Popular writers however, often attain their status through other qualifications, and aren't necessarily good writers. Ideally, however, since they are choosing words whose coloration is best suited to their subject and their readers, they should know the semantics of what they're writing. In point of fact, many writers are themselves beguiled by their words and cannot look dispassionately at them. If the spell is well cast, as in Coleridge's "Kubla Khan", there's no tampering with it; but for most writers an effort to charge their words with meaning is not amiss. The English language is lousy with synonyms from which to choose the neatest, most-charged word to build the context.

Thus, a political writer uses words like 'liberty', 'proletariat', 'capitalism', with the design of smuggling pleasant or unpleasant connotations into his contentions. Similarly a romanticist has his magic casements, his words with hidden lures and monitions; while the realist reveals his stark truths as words rend the veil through fair means or foul. Much of this connotation, double entendre, word-stacking, rabble-raising partiality of language can be described as "Semantic Erosion".

Now I don't know a hell of a lot about semantics, and my study has been random. Perhaps that's why I'm of a mixed mind on the subject of the use of words affected by semantic erosion, or those into which a prejudicial meaning (as opposed to their original etymological one) has been introduced. But in popular reading for entertainment and not for logical analysis (which needs the exactness of hair-splitting) this "nice disorder in the dress" of language isn't so bad after all. Words fraught with connotation carry us along in the mazy motion of fiction with its willing suspension of disbelief, bridging the gap between the fictitious promise and reality.

Take the figures of speech relating to intoxication - the Egyptian term "breaky-leg", ideographically expressing the rubber-leg quality of the man who is drunk. Whether a man is blotto, stinko, stewed, lit, plastered, pie-eyed, tipsy, pickled, stiff, three-sheets-to-the-wind, or what have you, is a subjective choice from one's mental Roget's Thesaurus.

Our language has much slang, which will continue in proportion as long as it bridges the gap with Bailey-bridge alacrity between object suggested and the person receiving the suggestion from the interpreting writer. It is more immediate to say "stewed" than "befuddled by the heating fumes of intoxicants". Slang comes and goes, is sometimes topical, local, and meaningless elsewhere in time and space.

For these reasons, semantically cröse words, while suitable for writing aimed at contemporary popularity such as that of Shakespeare, Defoe, Sterne, Dickens, or Mark Twain, (where examples can be seen) are out of place in writing of scientific nature such as that of Bacon, Milton (his essays), Einstein, Bertrand Russell, and others who are trying to express "pure reason".

If we consider Victorian literature as a house, with Shelley ~~on the ground floor~~ on the ground floor, with George Moore, Gibbon and Macaulay, Jane Austen and others up above, the Brontës apologetically occupying the annex, and Tennyson laboriously and luxuriously (but barely) writing in a well-appointed attic, a question comes regarding ventilation. For there's no doubt most of them were stuffy writers. Perhaps George Moore wrote with the windows more often than not, but it is impossible to deny that there is something in Victorian writing which makes us wonder regarding the furniture of their minds - it appears as if their owners were afraid a little air and damp would spoil the plush.

I think it was Professor Richard Garrett who said that there was this to be said for the period, that there were few who realized what kind of period it was for literature, few who saw in the blossom and sometimes of the rather gaudy Victorian flower, the brown, the mildew, that was but the prelude to decay and death.

It is more than mildly interesting, therefore, when, in exploring the sanitation and household amenities in the corners of our imaginary house, we come across a being living in the coal cellar, cultivating luminous fungus and fantastic mushrooms.

Thomas Lowell Beddoes published his collection of rather edible fungoid verse in 1850. I could doubly qualify my statement by saying that, to the collector of fantasy poetry, his work is very edible indeed, called "Death's Jest Book".

It is in the form of a play with a plot faintly reminiscent of "Hamlet", but the plot doesn't matter. Listen, and I'll send a spore or so drifting in your direction:

"If thou wilt ease thine heart
Of love and all its smart,
Then sleep, dear, sleep;
And not a sorrow
Hang any tear on your eyelashes;
Lie still and deep,
Sad Soul, until the sea-wave washes
The rim o' the sun tomorrow,
In eastern sky."

"I like a full-voiced fellow,
A craggy throated, fat-checked trumpeter,
A barker, a moon-howler, who could sing
Thus, as I heard the snaky mermaids sing
In Plagethon, that hydrophobic river
One May-morning in Hell."

And then, dear hearts, there are those you know so well, "The old crow of Cairn", and that delicious little scrap of a thing, a toadstool made for Faerie, called "Dream-Pedlary".

It is easy to detect influences in his work - Webster--the black magic of Webster - drips through it like gray rain through old roof-felt. But the texture is not a little thing, and Thomas' own. Assuredly, we can say, "Elizabethan", but isn't it more a mood of man, when, looking out on the 'culture' of cities, the churchyard walls, the damp smell of mould tantalises, and he notes the brown stain creeping up the wall-paper? Almost a criterion of his age, rather than an escape, isn't it?

And yet he committed suicide, being undoubtedly mad.
Perhaps the best way.

* * *

In contrast to our connoisseur of fungi, is Winthrop Mackworth Praed, a great fellow in his time, a society lion, a beast with a sense of humor which didn't go too deep. The only reason he's here is because he wrote an affair called "The Red Fisherman".

It would appear that friend Praed had an easy faculty with light verse, and "The Red Fisherman" is something that used to make them grin. I imagine it was quoted segment re Vicar at Hunt suppers, before the 'gentlemen' really became warmed up. But it was fairly harmless really, and is quite interesting reading now. It is too

slight a thing to quote, for a great deal depends on the story, which is told regarding an Abbot who stumbled into a haunted wood, and made the mistake of being drunk when he did it.

By the by, I suppose some of you have read Webster?

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"NATIONAL FANTASY FAN FEDERATION" open to British participants.

The major American fan organisation, the NFFFF has been discussing the practicability of English fans being able to join, amongst a selection of other subjects and projects. Knowing that the main obstacle would be currency regulations, the officers and Directorate have all agreed to the following suggestions put forward by the NFFFF President, E. Everett Evans;

"Briefly the plan is this. I am sending under separate cover a number of our new Welcom Pamphlets; also some membership applications. Will you be good enough to distribute them to whatever British boys might be interested.

Those who wish to join will fill out an application and send it to me. At the same time they can send us some English Fantasy or Scientifiction book or promag. These we will sell here and credit them with the money they received on their dues. We shall see to it that they are not sold cheaply; you may rest assured, for we are not trying to "gyp" them in any way. Rather we will probably see that they command exceptionally high prices because of this reason.

You can tell the boys that this makes them full and complete members, not just Associate Members, or anything of that sort. They will get all the benefits our own members do; will receive the monthly issues of the Official Organ; will be able to vote, etc., etc., and even etc.

We hope that quite a number of the boys will wish to join us. I suppose you have noticed that we are not maintaining a strictly "national" feel feeling about the NFFFF, for we have elected Les Crutch, a Canadifan, as a member of the Board of Directors, and he is proving one of our best and hardest working members."

This message was shown to the Executive Committee of the British Fantasy Society so as to show there is no feeling of rivalry between the two organisations, and the verdict was that there is no objection to any members of the BFS joining the NFFFF too, if they so desire. Your editor is a member of both organisations and would advise thusly. To the 100% fan, especially those interested in the American fan field, membership of the NFFFF would be valuable; but to the ordinary British reader and mild fan, I hope the BFS will cater fully for his desires and requirements. But if you are interested in the NFFFF at all, or would like to see their neat little thirty odd page printed introduction to fandom, send me, JMR, a stamped addressed envelope and the rest is up to you. By the by, NFFFF dues are now fixed at one dollar per annum.

The National Fantasy Fan Federation is now engaged in quite a number of schemes. Besides the introductory pamphlet the Society has been responsible for backing the publication of the Speer "Fancyclopedia", probably the most ambitious fan publication to date. Latest news is that the NFFFF is to start a MSS magazine on similar lines to the CSC & BFS "Beyond", with Charles "Turithak" Tanner as the editor-designate; formation of a MSS bureau is being considered; research on the question of micro-filming is taking place, Walter Daugherty of Los Angeles is in charge of a fullscale Directory of Fandom; listing of all fan fantasy films available for home showing has been accomplished (i.e. in USA); a Fanzine Publishers Manual is in preparation and voting for the recipients of the second series of annual awards has just taken place. More ideas are in process of gestation

And so I sit down to write the editorial which I have been anticipating writing for the last couple of years. Let me break it gently, dear friends; this is the last issue of FUTURIAN WAR DIGEST to be produced under my aegis. What the future holds is somewhat uncertain, but what is sure is that I can no longer manage to put out any regular magazine. So far there have been no indications of a successor to this publication though I hope the definite news of its finish will bring forth some offer or suggestion. What is certain is that the Bulletin of the British Fantasy Society will continue, & be published on its own, possibly in a somewhat enlarged form. Here I'd like to whisper a word in the ear of those independent spirits who have deliberately remained outside the fold of the BFS. Fandom is a minute community or culture on its own, and hence not indismissibly in need of a framework or organisation; which is what "fanarchists" maintain; YET once you want to get things done, there are only two possibilities --- dictatorship or some variety of democratic organisation. So far we have had a nice balance in Angliefandom, because for some reason, I have been accepted as a focal point. But this isn't going to apply any longer. So I would most urgently urge any person wishing to take a part in Angliefandom, or even to keep in touch with it, to join the BFS, and do their share. We have the vestiges of a good organisation here, lets show the Yanks that the BFS can parallel the National Fantasy Fan Federation, at least. Not that we want to be rivals to that society, rather complementary. And here I must offer thanks to Everett Evans and the Battle Creek gang for their most friendly and truly generous offer to take over the actual production of FIDO even to the financing thereof. It's a wonderful gesture but impossible in practice, unfortunately. But, as I shall say to Everett as soon as I can drop him a line, we may be able to get together with BROWSING and make that little sheet rather more worthwhile; especially on the matter of bibliographical data. It would be a shame to let such grand contributors as Malcolm Ferguson, Fred Brown, Arthur Busby, Bob Gibson, George Medhurst, Jack Banks and others run to waste.

But back to FIDO. for the time being I shall retain unfulfilled subscriptions unless I receive instructions otherwise from their owners. Should a Fido-successor arise, as I hope it will (and such a successor would receive my advice and what assistance is possible) I shall take the liberty of passing outstanding subs on to that magazine(s). O.K.? Regarding my own future fan plans; well, my own future is now in a state of flux, but I shall try to keep BROWSING going as well as possible though financial arrangements for that 'zine cannot be decided now. As soon as possible I hope to set out the long-promised "discussion" "Some Words of Wisdom on the Weird" which will be available via FAPA and direct to other people interested. Will the contributors to this discussion and especially Arthur Hillman please accept my sincere apologies for this unforeseen and unavoidable delay.

To all correspondents, I'm at a loss for words. You see I like receiving your letters, and mean to reply to them. But there really are too many to get attended too, which means that some will have to be dropped. Now, who? There's no-one I want to lose touch with -- I MUST remain linked with people interested in books, I like to get to know the new fans just making contact, I don't want to lose old friends. So I suppose I'll just plug on, weeks behind schedule, trying to get letters off whenever possible and constantly asking for your indulgence. And to think that once I prided myself on replying to all letters by return. Ah me, happy days ...

Somewhere else you'll probably find a few more items I wanted to say on this page, but couldn't think of at the time.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE LAST FOUR MONTHS.

'Tis somewhat of a large order to attempt to detail the happenings in Anglofandom during the longest interim period betwixt two issues of this magazine, so only such highlights as your editor can call to mind rapidly will be able to be listed.

The second "Noreen" duly took place at Leeds during the New Year weekend and a total attendance of 14 was noted. Some details were given in the February issue of the BFS Bulletin, and have also been sent to American publications. We hope to see you at the third Noreen next year!

Fans in service: lets start off with a pack of Yanks. Albuquerque Joe Gibson walked in to 4 Grange Terrace on Saturday December 23rd, and stopped overnight. He had been in action in France for a while and then suddenly found himself in Britain, so he came along. Since when he has disappeared into the blue once more. He had been preceded shortly by "Gus" Willmorth, breaking the journey from Aberdeen (guess whc) back to base. Gus was back again for the Noreen as you will remember and has since had a leave (sorry, furlough) in London. Newcomer to Europe is old-timer James Vincent Taurasi of Flushing, New York; active in the FAPA, New Fandom, Queens SFL and other stf organisations. He writes from somewhere in France. Somewhere in Germany is Bill Groveman mentioned last December as being in Britain, whilst Edwin Whitehead has moved from London to Paris, from whence he reveals that he has got himself engaged to an English girl, a WREN from Cheshire.

Early in December one of our Leeds worthies returned to Britain after some four years in the Middle East. Twas none other than Harold Gottliffe, one-time Director of the Leeds SFL. The gentleman told us he intended re-entering fandom and taking an active part therein. Three weeks later he announced his engagement, and celebrated his nuptials in March. So far he just hasn't had time for stf. News of another oldtimer came to hand when Ron Fishwick of Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, wrote from the BLA. Ron has been through Dunkirk, been in Cyprus and the Western Desert but apparently his wanderings are not yet over. On the other hand Peter Hawkins left these shores recently and will eventually report just which portion of the globe he is, at present, inhabiting.

Visiting; just a brief note of that in which I have been involved. As soon as I stopped working off I went to Aberdeen to spend a long weekend, a visit promised for some two years and greatly appreciated in the emotional state I was then in. On the way back I managed to look in at Dr W. A. Gibson in Bathgate, West Lothian. The Visiting list at Grange Terrace runs; Gus Willmorth, Eric Hopkins, Joe Gibson, Joyce Fairbairn, Edwin Macdonald, Terry Overton, Fred Brown and Bob Gibson. The latter we found here on March 25th, sneaking a 7 day leave out of a transfer from the CMF to the BLA. Thats three Gibsons I've seen of late, one American, one Scottish and one Canadian - where are you, Jack? Joyce Fairbairn has moved from London to Sheffield, and she and I have explored the bookshops of there and Leeds together.

Other news; Frank Arnold suddenly turns out to be with the "While Parents Sleep" company touring. Rhodesian Dmitri de Wernin has obtained his discharge from the army after suffering from malaria during service in Burma. Lots of people have been ill. Sincere sympathy to Forrest Ackerman, whose younger brother Alden was killed in Europe. Eric Williams sends regards to all confreres, he is now in the CMF. Re BFS prozinechains Ken Chadwick wants more consideration; how is he to arrange circulation when he received mags back, eleven together. Play the game, you cads. Should have put couple of announcements in but can't find them. Sorry.

Do You a Service?

"This is the situation," explained Mme Julianna, proprietress of the Reweaving Shoppe. "An important customer brought us these trousers to be repaired," indicating a bad gash in the brown gabardene pants. "It's a terribly tedious job and I simply haven't the time to tend to it -- what with customers to wait on -- telephone ringing every five minutes, etc. Our regular operator is on vacation at the present time. Now I know a place in Hollywood where these probably could be fixed, but being professional, I couldn't take my customer's job to them -- you understand?" So she called ASSORTED SERVICES for someone to play the part of an ordinary individual with a pair of pants to be repaired. This assignment was undertaken by our man-of-many-personalities, Operator Ackerman, who was coached for an hour in the rôle of the Unknown Individual. He was told the maximum price he should pay, the time allowed for the job, and was to secure a guarantee of perfect repair.

So bright and early our operator took the trousers up on the Boulevard and inside an hour was back at the office. The transaction had been singularly actionless, involving none of the well-rehearsed dickering.

The saleslady simply asked, "Name, please?"

He calmly replied, "Weaver Wright."

And she said, "We sure will!"

ASSORTED SERVICES

has served--and is serving--such citizens of scientifantasy fandom as BOB TUCKER...MOROJO...PAUL FREEHAFFER...MARY GNAEDINGER...ROBERT HEINLEIN...WALT DAUGHERTY & WIFE...JOE GILBERT...JJ FORTIER...POGO...CHESTER COHEN...CYRIL KORNBLUTH...LOUIS RUSSELL CHAUVENET...ARTHUR LOUIS JOQUEL II...GEORGES H GALLEY...NANCY FEATHERSTONE...JULIUS UNGER...BILL CRAWFORD...MAY WE ADD YOUR NAME SOON, FRIENDOM??

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