

col: 1

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containing
material

by

osmond

dremith

jtburke

ecwilliams

djeameron

and

others

Gargouyle

Round and About

BY CENTAUR

War is responsible for some funny things, and I don't necessarily mean the goings on in the blackouts. The most famous establishment in British fandom the Flat at 88 Gray's Inn Road, is finally smashed, and Bill Temple is settling down (we hope) to a tranquil existence with his wife. Arthur Clarke we hear is somewhere in Enfield, living on top of a hill - or is it two hills? The other hill must be for his famous Ego.

Also peculiar is a fanmag recently received in these parts - a typed affair called the "Fantaclynic". Heaven knows who produced this, but as it's free we don't mind. The postmark is Halifax, and the typewriter is something like that of Wilt Cockroft

March issue of Horizon contains an interesting article on Boy's Weeklies by G. Orwell, in which he mentions the new style of fiction that is creeping in - namely, science-fiction. Remember to buy the Wizard when you get tired of Amazing (though you ought to have been tired of that long ago). Same issue also has article "Communist Policy and the Intellectuals" which reads just like Doc Lowndes.

Speaking of Doc, we have an announcement from that worthy concerning a new, non-partisan magazine to be issued - "Science Fiction Weekly" which sells at 5s per copy - but we have no idea how English fans can subscribe.

Edmond Hamilton's space warped imagination is let loose in the new Standard mag. - "Captain Future". In his blurb he says that he is willing to send his three musketeers of space anywhere the readers wish. Come on, you guys - write and tell him!

(continued on page 18)

the MYSTERY

4

EARTH

by JOHN F BURKE

The man from Mars adjusted his ten eyes, scratched his lower chin with a flipper, and stepped out of the space ship on to the monotonous green of the planet called Earth, or in colloquial Martian, Thadump. Taking a pole with a piece of bunting on it from under his top layer of skin, he planted it in the soft soil, and said "I hereby take over this territory in the name of Gosh, the Emperor of Nether and Neither Mars." Those in the ship behind him saluted with their flippers, and broke into the raucous strains of the Eaton Canal Song, the National Anthem of Mars.

Having finished all the necessary tinkering and formalities, a small party left the ship and commenced to explore the surrounding countryside. It was evident that the district they had landed in was uninhabited, but they had seen cities as they skimmed through the atmosphere, and were sure that life existed somewhere. Trudging along over green meadows, uttering blasphemous oaths because of the terrible gravity, they at length came to the top of a rise, and looked down into a wide valley.

What had once been a city stood in the middle of this place, and from the huge gaps that had been torn in the masonry poked long muzzles, some of them almost inundated by fallen masonry and huge piles of debris.

"No!" gasped Tham, one of the leading Martian philosophers, who was one of the party. "It cannot be!"

"Wary!" said the leader gravely. "By the powers of Bog Yothoth, that our first interplanetary expedition should lead us to a world where the evils of warfare have not yet been eliminated! Let us see if these foolish beings have left any trace of them."

selves, or if they have all been killed, as was so nearly the case in our own far past."

Grimacing with distaste, the party went down into the shambles that had once been a mighty city but was now a dead shapeless ruin. That the catastrophe was only of recent occurrence could plainly be seen for the bodies had not yet decayed, and paper notices still fluttered slightly from the boardings in the city. But there was no sign of life, and the obvious agony in which so many of the men had died hinted at some deadly gas that might conceivably have eliminated all mankind.

The language on the posters was peculiar. The primitive method of sign writing still held good on this planet, it was evident, and many were the legends that greeted the Martians, though at the time they could, naturally, not understand them. After a short survey had been made of the city and several curiosities, including a number of old books from a deserted reference library (the Martians did not know it, but reference libraries were always deserted), they returned to the ship.

Among the books they had taken was a dictionary, and several children's books turned up in successive expeditions. A stay of two years sufficed to gather material, all of it from shattered towns littered with dead who had, of course, died to save their children from having to fight. They had done that all right, but no one ever lived to realise it. After this period the space-ship once more took to the void, leaving Earth quiet and still and thankful for the peace that had come after so many centuries.

Professor Eglaro, the scientific expert, was frankly contemptuous of the low grade of intelligence shown by the natives of the world they had just left, and pointed out

that if they had but one scientific brain worth speaking of the gas could easily have been counteracted, and that if they had had one man in the world with any sense the war need never have happened, since war is always futile. It is to be feared that he did not know the difficulties people of that time had to struggle under, for there had undoubtedly been great brains, which were suppressed by the ruling classes. The men who had died would readily have testified to the greatness of such different characters as Tommy Handley, John F. Burke, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, who were horribly misunderstood by the men in power.

The language expert, who was very interested in dead tongues and vulgar phrases so old that they stank, confessed that in one case he was puzzled. The huge pile of literature they had brought back from Earth (Thadump) had, after careful study by the best brains of the Martian world, given up most of its secrets, but the meaning of one particular phrase completely escaped everyone.

This phrase was displayed prominently everywhere, and though at first it was taken at its face value, it soon became obvious that a deeper meaning must be sought. The phrase appeared in newspapers, books, and on placards. It was apparent that it was the basis of some religion, as the Earthlings appeared to have been very superstitious, having raised artistically atrocious edifices all over the place in which to lose themselves in religious fervour; probably this was just another catch phrase like those of the books - "God is Love", "Onward Christian Soldiers", "The Flat Foot Floogie", etc.

Deciding to waste no more time on it, the scholars of the day left it, but from time to time it would interest many people, and

at one time a rather foolish millionaire who had made his money from selling toy submarines for the children to play with in the canals, proposed to devote some of his fortune to founding a chair in the university for anyone who would devote his life to the study of the mystic phrase. Fortunately he was taken to his maker, Sog Yothoth, and all that now remains of the mysterious religion is a large poster kept in the Royal Canal Museum, bearing the never to be translated message:

"Always take your gas mask with you".

R

REVU — by PAUL KENT.

"VICE VERSA" by JACK WOODFORD.

Described as "a novel in the sur-realist manner addressed to the anti-social, the engagingly mad and the entirely unconstructive" VICE VERSA is an essay in fantasy by the well known American novelist Jack Woodford.

From the first page to the last it is outre, bizarre, incomprehensible, pornographic, grotesque yet fascinating.

A delicious hodge-podge of fantasy, psycho-analysis, satire, insanity and Rabeliasian humour, narrated succinctly in a manner calculated to give the bewildered reader a perpetual series of mental - and moral - shocks.

And quite sur realistic
Whatever that means

The story of a mad man,
a mad woman, a mad dog, a mad snake and a mad

PAEAN by MIGUEL*

without apologies to Rudyard Kipling.

Whether Sykora can loose and bind
In fandom as well as on Earth;
If it be wiser to kill fankind
Before or after birth ---
These are matters of high concern
Where Speer and Warner are;
But Gholy State (we have lived to learn)
Endeth in Gholy War!

Whether the fans are decayed from the neck
Or only three-quarters dead;
Whether Taurasi is six years old
Or 4S has horns in his head ---
These are things we have gossiped of once
(And they will not plague us again)
For Gholy people, however it runs,
Must some day grow up and be men!

Whatsoever, for any cause,
Seeketh to take or give,
Fandom importance beyond the laws,
Suffer it not to live;
Gholy State or Foofoo's King--
Or great new fandom's Will--
Have no truck with the senseless thing.
Order your pens and kill!
Saying---after---me:--

Once there was a Fandom--Adolescence gave it
birth;
Once there was a Fandom and it made a Hell
of Earth.
Earth arose and crushed it. Listen: O ye
slain!
Once there was a Fandom--it shall never be
again!

* Fantacynic's pet mandragog.

..... by C. S. Ioud

FUNNY ~ by DR- BUSINESS SMITH ~

with apologies to—

Damon Runyan

I am standing on the corner one summer evening just as it is getting dark when who should I see but Sourpuss Slater who ups and gives me a big hello. I am somewhat surprised at this for Sourpuss is such a guy as is too busy chasing guys with dough to speak to me, but I answer him friendly because that's the way I am. This Sourpuss is a shortish fattish character with a square-shaped mug and has a strictly legitimate racket all of his own, which consists of buying up old shacks that are about on the scrap-heap and selling them for large sums to rich mugs as like that sort of thing. It is a good racket, and though the shacks often fall down in a very short time indeed it is not before the mugs are tired of them.

It turns out that Sourpuss has a great worry on him and he proceeds to unload his tale of woe to me.

"It is about a month ago that I buy a shack uptown," says Sourpuss. "It is a very fine shack although it is undoubtedly very old, and I pick it up very cheap from a guy who says he is going abroad. It is too valuable to sell very easy, but I get next to a certain prominent citizen who is no other than Mr Hiram C. Vandervans and I lease it to him for a year, getting two G in advance."

"Well that is very smart of you Sourpuss", I say. "Mr Vandervans is certainly no tightwad but two G is quite a gob for a deposit. But why does Mr Vandervans want another shack on top of all those he has?"

"I do not know," says Sourpuss, "and it is not for me to wonder about such things, but when the trouble starts it appears there is a very beautiful doll with him who is certain

ly not his ever loving and affectionate wife Lucilla unless she changes her name to Babs.

"It appears that Mr Vandervans and this doll are in the parlour of this old shack looking at Mr Vandervans' etchings when the doll complains she feels a draft. Mr Vandervans finds the door is open and gets up and shuts it. They are not settled down again when there is this draft again and Mr Vandervans has to shut it again, and this time he slides the catch. He is not sitting down long before the door is open again, and this peeves him quite a little so that when he shuts it again he jams the back of a chair under the handle so that it will take one helluva push to open that door. He is just picking up where he left off when there is a loud noise and they look up to find the door just swinging open and pushing the remains of chair in front of it.

"Well Mr Vandervans is somewhat lit-up and the chances are that if he is by himself he is not going to take any notice of these most unusual happenings but the doll with him is considerably upset, and when the couch they are sitting on is suddenly shoved across the room even Mr Vandervans thinks it is better they take the air.

"He is all sore up about losing the benefit of Miss Bab's company and he puts quite a beef about this shemozzle to me. In fact he desires me that I cause these happenings to cease forthwith and if I can't do this he is going to get the two G back he pays me for rent.

"And that", says Sourpuss, "is most awkward since I do not know how to deal with spooks and I spend the two G a week ago."

"Well Sourpuss" I say, "it seems the guy who sells you this shack pulls a fast one over

on you and personally I would give back the two G's and write it off as experience. But if you desire to unspook your shack Almanac Johnson will do it for you."

Sourpuss assures me that it is the latter proposition he is in favour of and I take him to see old Almanac. This is a very ancient guy who writes up astrology columns for the morning bladders and who looks very good in the photographs since he is covered with white hair from the neck up. We find him at his usual stance at Hooray Louis's, for this Almanac is something of a rumpot, in fact if he is not such a rumpot the chances are he is not going to lower himself to speak to such as me and Sourpuss. He listens to Sourpuss's proposition and says he is quite agreeable to taking a poke at this spook but it will cost Sourpuss five C's. Sourpuss is considerably pained by this and they have quite an argument, but Almanac wins in the end and goes round to his apartments to get his tackle.

Now why I do not bid Sourpuss a fond farewell at this point is something I never know, unless it is because I have a few snorts of apple-jack earlier on in the evening, because if there is one thing I can do without it is spook-hunting. But I wait with Sourpuss for Almanac and we have a few shots of rye to pass the time away, and when Almanac does come back I am feeling very friendly towards one and all, even Sourpuss. Which only shows what a sap rye will make out of any man, for ordinarily I do not like Sourpuss one little bit.

We all pile in a cab and go round to this shack of Sourpuss's and I have to admit that it is one fine shack. It stands all by itself with a big wall all around, and the room in which the happenings occur is very good indeed. Almanac gets us to pile all the furniture in one corner and takes up the carpets and draws

a five, or maybe it is seven, pointed star in chalk on the floor. At each corner he sticks a bit of candle and lights it, and he fetches a little pot thing out of his bag that he calls an incense burner, which produces a funny green smoke.

"Stand inside here and don't let out no sort of a squawk whatever happens", Almanac instructs us.

We do as he says, and he goes on drawing funny looking squiggles on the floor and now and then recites something in some spig language. Suddenly he throws some more powder on the burner that fills the room with green smoke so thick you can't see anything farther than the candles and begins shouting something and waving his hands like he was off his onion. What he was shouting neither me nor Sourpuss know, but it sounds like a cross between Taffy Jones with his pots on and monkeys chattering. Suddenly there is a crash like the door is kicked open and a considerable shenanigans commences somewhere, and Almanac chucks some more powder on the burner and continues to holler. Only it does not seem as though he is doing so good, for one or two of the candles begin to flicker as if they were being smothered and the shenanigans gets worse, and I think I hear someone laughing in a nasty sneering sort of way. And somehow it sounds as though this laughter is made by someone a long way off in a big hollow building or cave.

Almanac is very upset at this as far as I can tell for I am only seeing his outline in the green smoke, and he kind of gathers himself together and shouts something in a new language that sounds like someone gargling. There is a loud noise and I find myself lying on my back on the drive outside the house, looking up at the stars.

I get up, and there is Sourpuss and Almanac struggling up beside me and in front is nothing but a pile of ruins burning like celluloid. It seems best that we scam before the law appears, and though we are, of course, somewhat dizzy we depart very briskly, and we are not grabbed by any gendarmes and charged with arsen or some such. Almanac tells Sourpuss he is sorry it turns out thus but that the spook is a tougher spook than he ever met before, and Sourpuss says he will pay Almanac half the fee anyway if he will keep his mouth shut until Sourpuss collects the insurance. Sourpuss is not at all peeved at losing his shack, for he has it insured for a helluva sum and maybe he can talk Mr Vandervans out of the two G, and Almanac is quite happy. In fact I am the only one who is disturbed, and I am wondering if I really did see what I thought I saw outlined against the stars when I am blown out of the house on to my back, because if it is the rye I am going on the wagon for life, maybe.

REVU
by
PAUL
KENT

continued
from page
SIX

kinkajou and of their mad doings
in mad Hollywood.

A book suited
to the taste of evrybody --

excepting
Michelists
and Mr E. L. Gabrielson.

Y

Believe it or Not !

(editorial)

We repeat - BELIEVE IT OR NOT - but there was a time when we thought a gargoyle was a kind of mouthwash that made noises like a bath plug, (glug-glug-glug - to be onomatopoeically accurate). Nowadays, however, we know better. Our dictionary tersely tells us that a gargoyle is "a carved drainspout". (The curse of these Woolworth's dictionaries is that they are too inexplicit).

So apparently we have metamorphosed from a mere bath-plug into an adult drain spout - a remarkable feat of creative evolution indeed. We are justifiably proud.

Nevertheless, there is another facet to the problem. Johnny Burke politely informs us that a gargoyle is a thingummy for lifting faces. We have not the courage to question the voice of experience, but even granted the first hand evidence of Johnny, the radioactive processes leading up to this dogmatic definition are too obscure for our mundane intellects. But then, Johnny's mind is a law unto itself and who are we that we should emit fruity sounds? We are lost in a fog. What IS a gargoyle???

To make matters worse, and urgent communication from Will Temple adds a fourth side to the mystic triangle. "I am a gargoyle", he announces dramatically, "but even my best friends won't tell me!"

So, until somebody else contributes another side to whatever geometrical figure this definition is to represent, we wash our hands of the whole affair and express our complete ignorance of the meaning of the word GARGOYLE.

But we DO know what we want. We want contributions of every - and any - type, so long

as they contain just so much as a trace of cynicism - satire - wit - or even - humour. You may not be as original as Temple; you may not be so subtle as Smith; but if you can write something - no matter how brief - that is light and entertaining ... let's have it!

Finally, thanks in advance for filling up the rating slip enclosed with this issue and more premature thanks for your letters of criticism (should they ever materialise). A reader's letter section entitled "VOX FANOPOLI" will appear in number two of

GARGOYLE

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Edited by - David McIlwain



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AVERAGE FAN

by
DON J. CAMERON

So often have I heard the expression "the average fan" used by fans when talking about fans that I was prompted to find out once and for all the characteristics and idiosyncrasies, if any, of this much discussed "average fan". Only by standardising the popular conception of the A.F. can we hope to filter any meaning from the lengthy debates and discussions involving the aforesaid fan.

You know the sort of thing. It happens at every S-F meeting. Above the tumult one detects the more impassioned thunder of a controversy. One goes nearer. One gets an earful of this

"Smith is lousy, I tell you. Superscience ugh!"

"But I repeat"

"Ugh - ugh!"

"If only you'll"

"Ugh - ugh - UGH!"

"The average fan likes superscience!"

"Bo-lo-ney!"

"The average fan"

"The average fan be hanged! I think Smith is lousy so there!"

And so it goes on.

Or again --

"The average fan is the victim of sexual repression."

"Is he?"

"Without a doubt!"

"Well - er - I daresay. But I don't consider myself to be an average fan. Do you?"

"Certainly not! I said the average fan. I'm a superran - a top liner. I am not sexually repressed. But the average fan is. See?"

In such a manner is the A.F. accused of liking superscience, of being sexually repressed, of

being a snob, of being crazy, of being an introvert, a schizophreniac and/or a host of other undesirable polysyllabic things.

And so I came to consider the possibility of synthesising a true average fan - an ersatz fan. The idea was not new. It had been done before by both humorous and serious writers, and all types of homo sap. had suffered the humiliation of averaging. But never before had fandom been averaged.

It required long minutes - er - hours of research. Data had to be sifted and tabulated, much time was lost in bleaching the results of an overturned ink bottle, and many laborious periods were spent in drawing tadpoles on scraps of paper. However, encouraged by the realisation that I am, after all, British (and therefore a demi-god among the peoples of the world - see any newspaper or listen to the B.B.C.), I made one supreme effort and finished the self imposed task.

The results are of interest:-

The Average Fan is aged nineteen years five months, two weeks and four days last April the first. He is five ft. five in height, wears his trousers just below the knees, and shaves once every two and a half months. He has eleven and two thirds correspondents, and he answers his letters six and a half months after receiving them. (He still owes his two thirds of a correspondent two thirds of a letter from last Midsummer's eve).

The average fan's spectacles are five millimetres in diameter, and he sports a moustache one eighth of an inch square. He owns a seventh of a bicycle, and has ridden approximately three miles on same. The tyres of his seventh of a bicycle are punctured every nine years.

The Average Fan has half a girl friend, (the other half being in great demand by non-

fans. He spends 4.566d a week on his half girl, and 11/- a month on science fiction literature.

The average fan has a bath once every fifteen days, gets a haircut every seven weeks, and cleans his teeth every fortnight.

In spite of his evident lack of cleanliness, (though statistics show that the A.F. uses one tablet of Lifebouy Toilet Soap per month) the average fan marries at twenty two. His half wife (formerly his half girl friend) has one and three eighths children. (The other half, when married to a non-fan, has two and two thirds children, so it would seem that there is something in this repression business after all --- see beginning of this article.)

He has one fifteenth of a typewriter, one seventy-fifth of a motor-car, and eats three and one eleventh meals per day (in spite of rationing).

The average fan has written one hundred and twenty two and a quarter short stories, and possesses one hundred and twenty two and a quarter rejection slips. He has had thirty one letters, three full stops, and half an exclamation mark in print in promags. He has also written a homeopathic dose of novel, (thanks to W.F.Temple and D.McIlwain.)

He has been to church twice during his lifetime (excluding christening) and is in the army to the extent of a one hundred and thurty third. (This is approximately the pound of flesh which the government demands for cannon fodder. History repeats itself vaguely!)

As you can see from all of the above characteristics, the average fan is a very fantastic creature, (a Fantast, in fact?). All of the above attributes are the mean be-

tween widely varying extremes. For instance, though the average fan swears once every five hours, seventeen minutes three point four seconds, yet one of the individuals from whom the average was taken swears approximately seven times a minute, and another has never sworn since the time, three incarnations ago, when Henry VIII stole his wife.

Yet there is one characteristic in which every fan appears to be identical. All hold this same view. It is an irrefutable dogma. Every fan, without exception, regards himself and other fans as superior mentally, ethically, and aesthetically to the rest of humanity. Every fan regards himself as a potential genius frustrated. Every fan considers himself to be a little - sometimes a lot - above the normal intellect; a mutant member of the species with latent, though undeveloped, powers far transcending the normal.

Even I, poor fish, believe that.

But sometimes I wonder

ROUND & ABOUT by The CENTAUR (continued)

Recently came across Hutchinson's "Mystery Story Magazine" which ran round about 1927, featuring weird fiction by Wells, Sax Rohmer, Le Queux and others. Illustrated in some cases by fake spirit photos. Has anybody else come across this at any time?

Joint residence run by Weirheim Wilson, Wylie Michel and Landes seems to be coming along all right, judging by letters in "Voice of the Imagination" and "Le Tombiteur". We were about to ask when some English fans would get together, but thought of the Flat and dropped a silent tear.

Remember - your fanmags are in peril - subscribe to them with every halfpenny you have!

I

MEET A FAMOUS MAN.

by

Eric C Williams

(with apologies to Damon Runyan)

(By a strange coincidence two of our contributors in this issue have decided to dabble in Runyanism - see "Funny Business" on page 8. Mental telepathy? Mr Chibbett & the PROBE attention.)

This particular famous man is Harry Rattle of East 20th Street, Detroit. This guy is the first mug to have himself shot round the moon, also he has the craziest mind that a Rattle ever had. His news write ups are the screwiest ever. Wherefore, being that sort of a gent, I greases into my best pants and jump the 12:30 out-town.

This guy, Harry Rattle, doesn't interest me so far as his moon stunt goes, what takes me to death is his mind. He's goofy and a bit nuts so far as I can make out, and rich nuts are just my piece of cheese. Which is why I aim to meet up with Harry.

I see from the Detroit rags that this guy has a ring of busies round his hide out and that the only dope the Detroit newsboys get comes over a wire. Nobody sees this guy, which I think is just a bit strange. In fact, the whole thing has me steamed up. There's something not so - I decide, in fact, the phyness of this set up sticks out in my eye.

I drops off the Detroit wagon and hunt out a guy I know down East Side. This ham is Jerry the Handsome though he's got brains as well as looks and I tell him I've got a special date with Harry Rattle. This it works out is easy, and he slips me his private black-out suit. Ten minutes later I walk like a puff of wind past the two flats on guard outside Rattle's

hotel and breeze up the elevator to the ninth. I wait till a guy outside Rattle's door is looking at a passing lass then I wait in for this talk I'm going to let you boys in on.

Harry Rattle is sitting in a chair with his back towards me tearing at great pace through some sort of book on his lap. I climb out of my goodnight suit and step quietly up behind him. I find myself staring into a big brown eye set in the back of Rattle's head. Naturally I take one helluva count. When I snap out of it I see three eyed Harry has four arms and I take some more time off from the wakeful world. These spills go on for about half an hour until Rattle has shown me all of little tricks. This guy I find has three eyes, four arms, thirty two fingers, four legs, four ears, no nose, and one wow of a brain that does all of his talking for him. Also there are one or two other queer things about Harry that seep into me after a bit, some of his curries are green, and in fact I can see a whole rainbow in his thatching. Further, I note that his mouth is as good as not and that his chin is likewise.

I prepare to wake up in the nut house, but this gent's brain puts me wack. I am not nuts; moreover what I see is only the half of it. Harry's insides are more fascinating than his outsides. Controlled evolution is the new come. Would I like the dope on same or do I still want to go on with my blackmailing and swindling negotiations? He apologises. He takes it I'm more interested in the dope. Harry Plus as he calls himself then gives me the inside.

[To Be Concluded.]

(And you too will want to know the inside of this ingenious mystery, so order your copy of GARGOYLE No. 2 NOW! The circulation is limited - first come first served.)