

gargoyle

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No: 3.

DATE OF DEATH



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en passant

an editorial

You are holding in your hands the third number of GARGOYLE, yet, believe me, you are not one half as surprised as I am that it should have finally appeared. The present - and future - existence of GG is due solely to the kindness and philanthropy of a new Liverpool fan: Reggie Potter. He has undertaken to duplicate the magazine (on an Ornigactory) while yours truly types out the negative carbons. With a spot of luck, and begging the indulgence of the Fates and Hitler, GG should appear at fairly regular intervals, but whether monthly or bi-monthly it is impossible at the moment to predict.

There is no need for me to point out the many difficulties which have arisen as a result of the war - you know them already. If, therefore, GG seems of poorer standard than usual, please be lenient. Comments and criticisms will always be more than welcome.

There are some twenty-odd fans who have not heard from me for some months, and to them I would like to tender apology. Always a lax correspondent, I feel that wartime has only aggravated the condition. Do not give up hope, please, - the impulse to bring correspondence up to date may strike me at any time at all. And if John F. Burke or anybody else tells you that I informed him you were not worth writing to -- take no notice. It will be a lie - motive unknown (to me at any rate).

I have some odd issues of the unfinished GARGOYLE No. 3 which may be of interest to fans. They contain excellent articles by Eric Williams, John F. Burke, Arthur Clarke, Maurice Hanson, Doc Lowndes, and an "impressionist" cover by BATES, and are available on application.

Articles, material etc, suited to the policy of GARGOYLE will be very welcome. If possible they should be short and snappy and topical - like the Eric Williams opus in this issue. Facetious fiction is not quite so welcome, but will be considered.

And so to GARGOYLE. Until next time -- if any -- good luck to you all, and may Ghu protect you from those oviparous aviators of the Reich.

Happy days:

Dave McIlwain

STF GETS IN YOUR EYES

by WEAVER (4sf) WRIGHT

(nb: "stf" is pronounced "stef")

They askt me how I hue
That stuff would come true
I of corse replyd
"These things prophesyd
Cannot be denyd."

They said
"Someday you'll find
They affect your mind.
When your brain's afire
You must realise
Stf gets in your eyes."

So I chaff 'em
& I gayly laff
To think they coud doubt my stf
Yet today
"They" took me
Far away
To all my pleas--were--deaf.

This, then, is my reward
Lookt up in a ward!
& they smile & say
"We know he'd crack
some day."
DOPE, BETTER GET WISE!

GARGOYLE is a FAN publication, and comes to you from ---
14, Cotswold St., Kensington, Liverpool 7, England.

SOLEMN WARNING

ERIC C. WILLIAMS

Professor Low once said to me as I sat listening to him at the last S.F.A. Convention, "Sad though it seems the inventive powers of the human race are at their highest level when put to the making of warfare." This truism is not Professor Low's own property; and it gains even more authority through being uttered by a thousand other great thinkers and professors. Statesmen have said it, but they used it as an excuse for making war. However, no matter who tells us, it seems true that men can think up more cunning dodges when they are fighting for life than when they are just living.

All of which I say to introduce my warning to the future Fandom of England.

At the present time we are in a ferment of activity induced by war. Daily we bind faster the bonds of Fandom by a thousand new avenues of activity and research. We are raising S.F. to heights undreamed of in peacetime; our standards are soaring until we look back to 1930 and sneer. We meet and communicate to an extent unthinkable before the war. This is a Utopia we could never have visualised in those old days of lethargy.

Now we must cling to what this war has given us. A great slackening off always follows in the train of warfare. Minds collapse from the pinnacles they have held throughout the duration of the fighting, and the depths they plumb are lower than their original level. We must take care to avoid this descent at all costs, guard our new ideals with constant vigilance. All that we have built up must never fall; never must the old days return with their gloomy apathy. Our new spirit must live for the glory of S.F.

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 * -- The SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION was an orga

THE BRITISH FAN IN HIS SUPERNATURAL "HAUNT"

by William F. Temp

The Editor has asked me to write a fictional account of a ghost hunt with Harold Chibbett, SFA's spook-tamer, and Secretary of "The Probe". But there is no need for it to be fictional. I once did ghost hunt with Harold. This happened some time ago, and I rely upon an unreliable memory. But I seem to remember it went something like this:-

Harold had asked Arthur and I to tea. We went. We found that Harold's house in Bowes Park stood facing a railway cutting, and away to the right was Alexandra Palace, a grey-brown bulk on the dusky horizon, with its television tower pointing up at the early stars, as if trying to place among them its own red star of warning light, which Oh! I forgot I wasn't going to be paid a cent a word for this.

Mrs Chibbett was away. Harold was alone in the house. At tea (which I dimly remember was bloater-and-crab paste, bloater-and-ham paste, bloater paste, and bloater) we were talking about spooks. Harold said: "This old house is simply thick with them. Such a nuisance. They sometimes get sucked into the vacuum cleaner. And come out all dirty, and wander about the place making it dusty again."

Arthur said: "Let's hunt some." We agreed. Harold turned out all the lights, and we crept up the stairs, which were most unusually placed in the centre of the house, between two narrow walls. Suddenly we heard soft steps going up the stairs in front of us. We stopped with bated breath. Harold switched on his torch. He was trembling so much that the beam wavered about all over the place, shone into a place the door of which should really have been shut, and then all over the ceiling. I grasped his wrist firmly (I remember that

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part clearly) and focussed the light on That which was before us.

It was only Arthur's Ego, which had gone on ahead impatiently. I told Arthur to call it back; it was spoiling our sport. Arthur whistled it. It turned, and regarded him with outraged dignity. "Don't whistle at me, you sap. What are you hanging back for? I'm not scared. Come on up here. Show the others that you're a man."

It turned and tried to march into the table-tennis room. But its chest was so puffed with pride that it got wedged in the doorway. It had to deflate itself to get through. We followed. This room contained only the table-tennis table and nothing else. But a strange, fetid odour suddenly spread in it. We choked. I took the torch and shone it around.

Something was materialising under the table. A large gray thing. I caught a glimpse of a scaly skin and great curved talons that contracted and reached again like eager fingers. And then the face of a devil! A reptilian head with horns and glowing red intelligently ~~XX~~ evil eyes - horrible - staring at me; and a snarling open mouth with long sharp fangs from which saliva dripped. The Ego gave a shriek and vanished up the chimney. Arthur looked like following it. Harold, strangely enough, looked quite composed.

Then a strange thing happened. The long sharp fangs of the beast fell out of its mouth and clattered on the floor. Instantly it was covered with confusion.

"Curgh it!" it said, fumbling about for them with its talons. "Can't get a shingle upper plate that'll shtay there theshe daysht. All dentishtsh are shwindlersh." When it had replaced them, Harold introduced us - (to the beast, not to the teeth). "Arthur - Bill - meet the Thing. You must have read about him quite a lot. Especially in WEIRD TALES. He's an old friend of Lovecraft's."

"How do?" we chorussed. "Not bad" said the Thing modestly. "I still get around quite a bit. Mostly in amateur author's stories now, admittedly. But the professionals still use me as a stand-by quite a bit. Nothing like the old Thing for sure-fire horror, they say. But they sometimes put me in supporting roles now - I'm getting on in years for star roles."

"Yes, I remember when I was a boy" I said. "I always wondered how you produced the 'fetid odour'".

"Well, it's a professional secret really. But as Harold is my host for a week, and you're his friends, I'll let you in on it." It came closer and whispered confidentially to us: "I don't use Lifebuoy Soap!"

At this moment the Ego emerged from the grate, rather sooty. "You've got a dickens of an up-draught up that chimney," it said to Harold reproachfully. And then, with all the calmness in the world, it challenged the Thing to a game of table-tennis. So we left them playing and went into Harold's little den.

But enough of this weak humour, the symptom of the Facetious Fan (see Smith's masterly analysis of Fandom in the last issue of GG). Let me tell you what actually happened when we went into the den that night. An please note that this is a truthful record, without any embroidery of exaggeration.

The little room was in a part of the house which jutted out from the rest of it, like a peninsula. There were two desks, a typewriter, a telephone, and a bookcase. On the walls hung, like bats, grey old stencils of the "Probe's" Bulletin. Also a calendar from "Mr and Mrs Dennis Wheatley, for they are acquaintances of Harold. The books were almost all about psycho research, and there was one big red tome (exceedingly rare and valuable) by a modern Master Adept of Black Magic, containing Fearful Secrets and Potent Spells. Unfortunately it was couched in extremely obscure metaphor: deliberately disguised meaning. Harold translated some, and it was

pretty grin.

Then Harold began to tell us of his recent experiences, and they made us feel uneasy. Now Harold believes, as we believe, and as any unprejudiced person with any knowledge believes, that undoubtedly supernatural and inexplicable phenomena do occur. Harold can tell the most fantastic inventions when he's feeling humorous, but he wasn't feeling humorous at this particular time, and we knew that he was speaking truth.

After a most bloodcurdling affair of a rectory haunted by the malicious spirit of a murderer, and sounds of digging in the night, and of an eye appearing in the haunted bedroom and frightening the occupant, and of mysterious thumps around the walls, he went on to vampires. He was investigating the case of a woman who said she was being visited by a vampire which came through the window at night. She lived quite near in London. He had actually seen and examined the toothmarks on her neck. She was scared to death, and nearly scared Harold to death.

"But the worst thing about this vampire --" began Harold, and then we nearly jumped out of our skins.

For: Thump. Thump. Thump.

Three heavy, deliberate thumps came on the glass window of the den. Right beside us. The window which was on the first floor, and away from the rest of the house. And the house was empty.

For a moment we stood paralysed. I thought it might be a joke of Harold's. But one glance at him standing there with open mouth and startled eyes convinced me that it wasn't.

Arthur, the scientist investigating, drew back the curtains. No, there was no horrible face peering at us through the glass. He threw up the window and

leaned out into the dark night. We looked out after him. Not a thing moving in the little suburban garden as far as we could see. Not even a cat.

What had it been? Something had caused those loud purposeful thumps.

"Well -" I began, and then something seemed to occur to Harold. He opened the door of the den, and there the table-tennis room was his brother-in-law, laughing very heartily. He had a key to the house. He had come in and found the rooms empty downstairs. But, coming upstairs, and looking out of the table-tennis room window, he had seen the light in the den window (this was in the happy days before the black-out). He guessed we were in there talking about psychic research. After grabbing a common or garden broom, he had leant out the window and poked hard with the broomhead on the window, eight or nine feet away.

Harold has never been the same man since. Every time I see him at the "Red Bull" I have to buy him several drinks "for his nerves". I have observed that he keeps his nerves in his stomach.

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(From "Ingersoll's Essays".)

Thomas More declared that to give up witchcraft to throw away the sacred scriptures. In my judgment he was right.

in Wesley was a firm believer in ghosts and witches, insisted upon it, years after all the laws upon subject had been repealed in England. I beg of you remember that John Wesley was the founder of the Methodist Church.

..... FROM INGERSOLL

party broke up with the arrival of the A.F.S. and a stirrup-pump from next door.

WHAT DO YOU READ DURING AN AIR RAID? Without the editor's permission, I am inviting you to mention in your letter of criticism on this issue (Ghu knows, you'll find plenty to criticise), what you read in your sheepshanty or under the bedclothes - always providing you don't spend the time swigging brandy and shaking at the knees. We know that Mike Rosenblum and Sam Youd write letters, Dave McIlwain makes up his mind to write letters, but falls asleep under the table instead, Ron Holmes practises dance steps, and John Burke spends his time between writing a novel and reading ~~garlix~~ "You'll Need a Night Light", just to see that he doesn't get scared.

Those of you who enjoyed Sonneman's "Council of the Drones" and "Greta" will find a far superior example of that type of story in the September and October issues of the English "Argosy" - Ben Hecht's "Advent of Professor Emmett."

I notice in a recent issue of SPACEWAYS the Star Trek-er's comment that Henry Kuttner is now modelling his style on that of Stephen (note spelling, please) Vincent Benet. Maybe someday John Russell F. will get round to imitating Sherwood Anderson, and Binder will copy Turgenev, and oh there's no telling where it may stop. Someone may even go back to developing his own style -- maybe.

We confess with the deepest regret that we made a very unfortunate error in announcing the death of Harry Kay at the beginning of this column. We are sorry to say that we were wrong, that Mr. Kay is still alive, and apologise for any inconvenience caused. The "GA GOYLE" is always first with the news !!

CENTAUR.

XX

PEEK : in4ma1 & in4mativ poortraits of Famous Fans
 PEEK :
 PEEK : No: 1 ERIC FRANK RUSSELL by Ron Holmes.
 PEEK : -----

The strains of the National Anthem rang through Liverpool's Picton Hall as I disentangled my arms from around the G.F.'s waist and rose. No paean of loyalty sprang to my lips, nor did it to three quarters of the 1700 who filled the Hall. The Chairman sang alone, much to the chagrin of the people who had attended that Pacifist meeting, for the spirit in the Hall was not attuned to patriotism. My fleeting glance passed round a row of sober faces - and then I saw a fiendish grin, a grin which seemed to say: "What a lot of tripe it all is!" You're right. It was Eric Frank Russell, complete with wife (also equipped with similar grin).

As we wandered homeward after the meeting, Eric suggested that we should have supper at 44 Orrell Road. So with alacrity we accepted.

The Russell domicile is situated in one of these new built-up areas, with all modern inconveniences, one of which was E.F.R.'s study - half filled with child's toys. We managed to force our way through stacks of Doll's houses, cots, etc, to his desk, where Eric threw himself into his chair, and struck an attitude. A second later he shot up again clutching his ankle: the entire space under the desk was filled with magazines, and his outflung foot had knocked a pile of same down on to his feet.... resulting in some very picturesque language.

Eric then produced volumes of snapshots which he had taken during his trip to New York, showing himself with Charles D. Hornig, Julius Unger, Jack Williamson, and a whole row of the "Queens" boys. Pictures of N.Y. itself which, by the way, were used to illustrate an article about his trip to N.Y. in "Braby's Magazine". Eric is a salesman to this firm, and his article has run for six consecutive months in the magazine, and is still

going strong. Proudly he showed me the originals of dozens of Astounding illustrations: as a gesture of friendship he presented me with several proof copies of these illustrations, sent to him by J.W. Campbell. "Why have you so many detective magazines about the place?" I asked, distracting his attention so that I might try to secrete away one of his three foot square originals. But he turned too quickly, and said: "I write detective, you know. In fact I have thought of giving up S.F. to write detective only." It appeared that he can make more money with less trouble this way but as his heart is in S.F. he can hardly give it up

Lying on his desk was a letter, which, with the pure intentions, I read. It was from Hank Kuttner, and contained words which no self-respecting censor would pass. I remarked on this, but Eric merely said that Hank was always like that. He then commenced to give me a full description of Hank and the rest of the Queens boys.... How Otto Binder (always pronounced Or-ro Byn-der) is the handsomest chap he has ever seen how Jack Williamson spends his time a few hundred miles from his nearest neighbour, and writes S.F. in a little cabin a mile from his house. How Sam Moskowitz always shouts when he talks. And of a tour of Long Island Jack Williamson on his knees in a car that was built for five, but was holding eight.

The sweet voice of Mrs Russell brought us out of our stupor, and we returned to the ladies in the dining room. We imbibed tea, and more tea. Eric talked and talked. Suddenly he dived for the bookshelf and produced volumes and volumes of Fort, not that I wasn't expecting this; Eric is Fort mad. He showed me one copy he had been searching for for years, and told how Edmond Hamilton presented it to him, thus earning Eric's eternal devotion. Eric then thrust into my hand a complete set of Fortean Society Magazines, all the rest of them. They were truly interesting, but unfortunately only seem to appear about once in every two years, or thereabouts. Midnight had passed when he produced a complete set of "Spaceways", the only complete set in the country. And three issues of "Sweetness and Light"

a farinag produced by Russ Hodgkins in Los Angeles -- check full of degenerate jokes, and illustrated by 'Weird Tales' artist - Mooney.

Eric has spent most of his life in the Army, served many years in Palestine, and the bane of his life is a snapshot which Mrs Russell keeps of him seated on a donkey. He always mentions it as "Jesus ~~was~~ entering Jerusalem." I remarked that there was not very much difference. Eric drew himself up to his full height of 6'2" and demnded to know what I meant. He's an out-and-out Atheist (in fact, he makes a god of atheism). I cunningly replied that I saw little difference between him and the donkey, so he calmly looked over my shoulder and turned the photo the right way up.

A quarter past one found the Russells escorting us home: we walked through the blackout arm in arm, ploughing down all pedestrians who came in our way. While we walked we talked: every subject passed our lips. Mostly we talked of English fans, of his first meeting with Ted Carnell, and how he stood in the wrong station waiting for Ted; how he found the correct station an hour later, and was confronted with 17 clocks to stand under. And how later Ted turned up with his umbrella and red tie. As we parted I called after them: "Goodnight - be good." And the answer came back innocently from the darkness - "Why?"

XX

A FEW IMPRESSIONS

A FEW IMPRESSIONS

.....by..... JOHN F. BURKE.....

The peculiar coincidence which resulted in two fans submitting parodies on Damon Runyon gave me to think furiously, and in the course of my cogitations it struck me that mimicry in Fandom has not been carried to nearly the lengths which we hear on the radio. Hundreds of people make a living by parodying others - why not try it with our favourite form of literature? Inspired by the thought of making money (Gargoyle offices shake dangerously at the mention of payment-on-public-

ation) by doing other people's work, I herewith offer you a few - ah - impersonations. If you will get out your last instalment of Jack Williamson's "Legion of Time" and study the short passage describing Sorainya's dissolution, and then come back to me, I will endeavour to give you a few impressions as to how I imagine various people would treat the same thing.

First, EDGAR ALLEN POE: The cylinder which I found beneath my foot was a small silver object, and I knew that to break it would be to crush Sorainya's victorious beauty. I experienced a sentiment half of horror half of remorse, for the crime of which I should be guilty were I to trample it underfoot. I was at once struck with an incoherence, an inconsistency in my attitude, for, despite the urgent necessity of ridding the world of this monstrous being, I could, nevertheless feel the beating of my tell-tale heart, and I realised that I was enamoured of the immortal beauty of the war-

Then I stepped - God forgive my miserable soul - upon the tube, and as I did so, I heard ejaculations absolutely bursting from the tongue of the sufferer, as her whole frame at once shrunk - crumbled - rotted away before my eyes, leaving a nearly liquid mass of loathsome - of detestable putrescence. Her last dying shriek will forever ring in my ears, miserable mortal that I am.

A.E. HOUSMAN: Defeated Queen Sorainya
Begins to shrill and cry,
"O young man, Denny Lanning,
Tomorrow you shall die."

O, foolish Queen Sorainya,
I think 'tis truth you say:
But I can read the future,
And you will die today.

SID WALKER: Lumme, I do bump into some funny things don't I? There was this 'ere tube at my feet, and the girl standin' lookin' at me, like as though I was the monster myself. Now what could I do, I ask you? If I

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--- goes away and leaves things as they are, this 'ere woman would go about spreadin' more trouble. Yet if I trod on it - well, it don't seem right somehow, and it would be a very messy business. What would you do chums?

T.S. Eliot:-

Shape I dare not meet in dreams
In death's dream kingdom
You shall soon appear:
A shape without form, shade without colour,
Paralysed force, gesture without motion.
Between this small tube
And the deed
Between the desire
And the act
Falls the shadow
For thine is my heart.
For thine is
Life is
For thine is the
This is the way Sorainya ends
This is the way Sorainya ends
This is the way Sorainya ends
Not with a cheer by a squash

The next part of the programme will follow when the orchestra has woken up.

C.S.

NOMENCLATURE AS A FINE ART

C.S.

YOUD

YOUD

Someone rather wiser than C.S. Youd once said that there is nothing new under the sun, and I would not dare to impugn his scholarship by making any extravagant claims for originality on the part of this article. As a matter of fact it was directly inspired by a work of the renowned Sage of Nuneaton, any explanation of whose title would be completely superfluous. The work in qu-

question dealt with the influence of names on science fiction.... a very important branch of research that has hitherto been strangely neglected.

I think this imaginative, yet logical, tour de force might be carried further. Of late years, "fannags" have been mushrooming up by the dozen, and their editors have either originated, or permitted, pet-names for them, a revolting piece of sentimentality to all right-thinking persons. Let us consider how far the Sages theory applies here.

The first fannag recorded as having a pet name was the LA SFL IMAGINATION! This was known familiarly as "Madge" and anyone capable of reading and appreciating that conglomeration of glorious fooling will agree that the gay insouciance of a Madge was maintained to the end. (I make the two stipulations of "reading and appreciating" because many who managed to steer clear of the Scylla of Ackerman's typewriter fell, foaming at the mouth, into the Charybdis of Ackerman's puns.)

Then there was "Nell", Dick Wilson's NEWS LETTER. For news-sheet Nell, as a student of smithology would guess, was a rather flighty piece of goods, and her death-knell was not long delayed. Similarly volatile was "Levy", Lowndes' LE VOMBITEUR, which has recently re-appeared. Had Wilson and Lowndes carefully considered matters before naming their offspring, they would surely have avoided names so obviously unreliable. But no excuse can be offered for Bill Groveman, who laid claim to "Fanny" for his FANTASHER. Such oafishness was fittingly rewarded by the disappearance of the magazine with its 3rd issue - a fate, I venture to suggest, that would never have overcome a "Tassy". Other fannags have been called "Fanny" without the consent of their proprietors; there are FANTASY DIGEST, FANTASCIENCE DIGEST and FANTASY NEWS. None of these have actually given up the ghost, but there can be no doubt that their successes would have been greater but for the slur.

There are some who would question the aptness of "Au

for NOVAE TERRAE, Britain's first and best. Still, Aunt was a little staid. And "Sally", surely, indicates a type that some will like and some will not (the same applying to ~~Sally~~ "Sal" of Los Angeles, I understand), but a type that will display robustness and staying power. "Mack", as could be guessed, is sparing in favours --when does number 2 arrive, Jimmy? While wishing to retain as much modesty as possible, I would point out that "Fay", for FANTAST, has an ethereal uncertainty backed up by the solid meat of recollection of the lady who gave King Kong the air. Still, its very uncertainty should prevent ill wishers from taking with utter seriousness editorial protestations of demise ...

And so, gentle reader, think twice before publishing a farmag, and try, if possible, to give it a name that inspires confidence. On second thoughts don't give it a name at all. Like Harry Warner, editor of the excellent and punctual SPACEWAYS, you will find that it pays.

STRANGE TALE

by

ERIC S. NEEDHAM

"Well, yes" murmured my uncle, eyeing me across the fuming crater of his monstrous pipe. "Superstition may have seemingly authentic proofs of its existence, but ~~it~~ I do not think that there is one scrap of evidence to support it which is not just sheer coincidence. For instance, I remember a case, some while ago, of a man who met with some bad results through walking under a ladder.

"He happened to walk under a ladder as the painter above unfortunately knocked his can of paint over, ruining his brand new, and only part-paid-for, suit. He jumped to one side, hit the ladder, brought the painter down heavily, breaking three of his ribs in the fall, while the ladder crashed through the wind-screen of a parked car." He paused and looked at me.

"Now you might say that all this proves that superstition has; as some people put it, something in it. But listen!"

"A month after, the same man was walking along the same street, and saw a ladder with a painter on it, in the exact spot as before, so consequently, he took pains to avoid it, stepping well out towards the kerb. A baker's boy, carrying a tray, was also on the edge of the kerb, so that when this man stepped out to avoid the ladder the boy was forced to step into the road. A car, travelling at high speed, swerved to avoid him, skidded across the road and crashed into a lamp-post, smashing all the glass. The baker's boy jumped for it, dropping his tray, which caused his over to discharge him. The car which crashed did not belong to the driver, but to his neighbour, who sued for damages, but since the man did not pay, he was in contempt of court and was sent to prison. A passer-by at the scene of the smash cut his foot on some broken glass, and the sight of the blood caused an old woman to faint, dropping the bottle of gin she was carrying home, which gave her a grievance for the rest of her life; while the passer-by who cut his foot developed tetanus and died. It so happened that he was back from a seven year's expedition, and was on his way to send a telegram to his mother to inform her of his return, but since he died before he could send his mother later died of a broken heart, and left her money to her eldest son, who drank himself to death causing his daughter to renounce the wicked life and enter a nunnery, where she subsequently broke her head and was wallied up alive. The baker's boy who lost his job was unable to get another, so his sweetheart jilted him, making him leave home to seek a living in the world; but, regrettably, he was robbed by some thieves, which left him so depressed that he committed suicide by setting fire to the empty house in which he took refuge. The fire, I am sad to say, burned down all the row of houses, causing an estate agent to jump into the sea in deep despair, much to the annoyance of the neighbours."

"Proud men
Eternally
Go about
Slandering me,
Call me the "Calliope",
Sizz.....
Fizz....."

"Very neatly turned", I admitted. "Most original and to the point."

There was a moment's silence. Then we passed on to the subject of literature, but when I mentioned Mrs Gaskell, craving expert opinion, we found ourselves discussing music, and decrying the general insipid (I think the word was 'insipid') nature of modern popular tunes. Thence to cynicism, a delicate subject where seemingly, the idea lies in having a good knowledge of the facts, being as vindictive and spiteful as you feel inclined, seasoning the whole with 75% friendly humour, and leaving the readers, if any by this time to draw their own conclusions. Above all, never overestimate their intelligence (that would be impossible with fantasy fans, of course), and always have an answer to your provocative insinuations up your sleeve. It so easy, anyway.

"By the way" I mentioned, "Is Miguel about? Can't I
I've had much experience with mandrills."

"No, I'm afraid you can't see him. This not being his consulting hour, he's in bed, asleep, just now. Quite a wit, Miguel, according to his ~~high~~ own lig. Outside his kennel he has a notice: "Cave canem - no cycling except on leash," which just goes to show ye. Of course, the obvious crack is to substitute "cave can't" but this seems to leave him untouched. You've doubtless read his pagan, which Youd transcribed and retouched...."

Here he seemed to be about to burst into

lyric effulgence. Thinking quickly, I tried Bill Temple's dodge, and threw him a cold stare. It worked unexpectedly well - hit him on the centre of the forehead - and he quickly changed the subject. He did at one point manage a neat little sonnet in the best Bottom of My Garden tradition, saying it was a piece he had tried to work into the "Survivors". As I remember, it was a mournful epitaph, charged with ethereal beauty, and he volubly intoned something which began.....

"I met no traveller, but an antique fan
Whose head"

and finished somewhat in the strain of -

"The cold and weary winds wail from far and far"
It reminded me, somehow, of Shelley, or a poet I'd read, or something, I don't know why.

After that little was said, beyond Fanta telling me in strict confidence just who was a Gargoyle; he also mentioned at one point that I was the epitome of hyperborean inconsequentiality, but I haven't had time to look it up yet. I said I must hurry, as I wasn't as young as I used to be, and it was a long way home. So that was the last I heard of Fantacynic's voice was a friendly "Any time you're passing - pass!" After all the publicity I'm giving him too!

Retreating hurriedly, I heard a cheerful whistle, rendering the strains of the "Beer Barrel Polka", and wondered vaguely that C.S. so blatantly ignored his powerful neighbour's aversion to such ephemeral harmonies. Laying himself open to a spot of cynicism! But I had no time to stop and say good bye; for I had to walk home that night, and from Eastleigh to Aberdeen is no mean distance, even for such as I.

Rating Slip - Gargoyle 3 -

We regret that certain page margins have been faultily printed: this was due to an error in the spacing of the typewritten matter ~

		MARKS
STEF GETS IN YOUR EYES	—	
SOLEPIN WARNING (E.C.W.)	—	
BRITISH FAN, ETC. (W.F.T.)	—	
ROUND & ABOUT. (CENTAUR)	—	
PEEK No 1. (RON HOLMES)	—	
A FEW IMPRESSIONS (JFB)	—	
NOMENCLATURE, ETC. (GKY)	—	
STRANGE TALE. (E.S.N.)	—	
INTERVIEW, ETC. (D. Webster)	—	

Please mark each item from 1 to 10 according to merit, and return this slip.