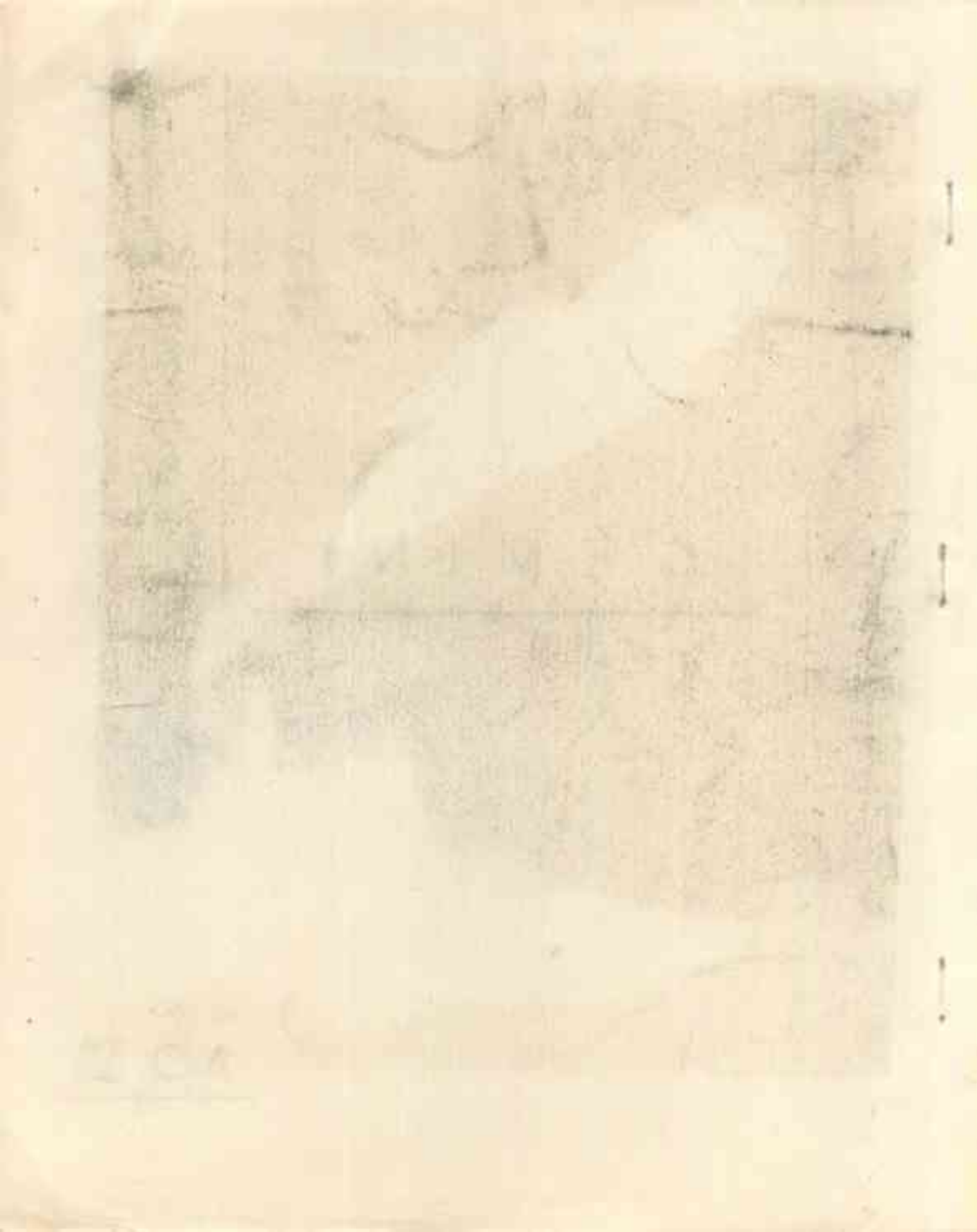
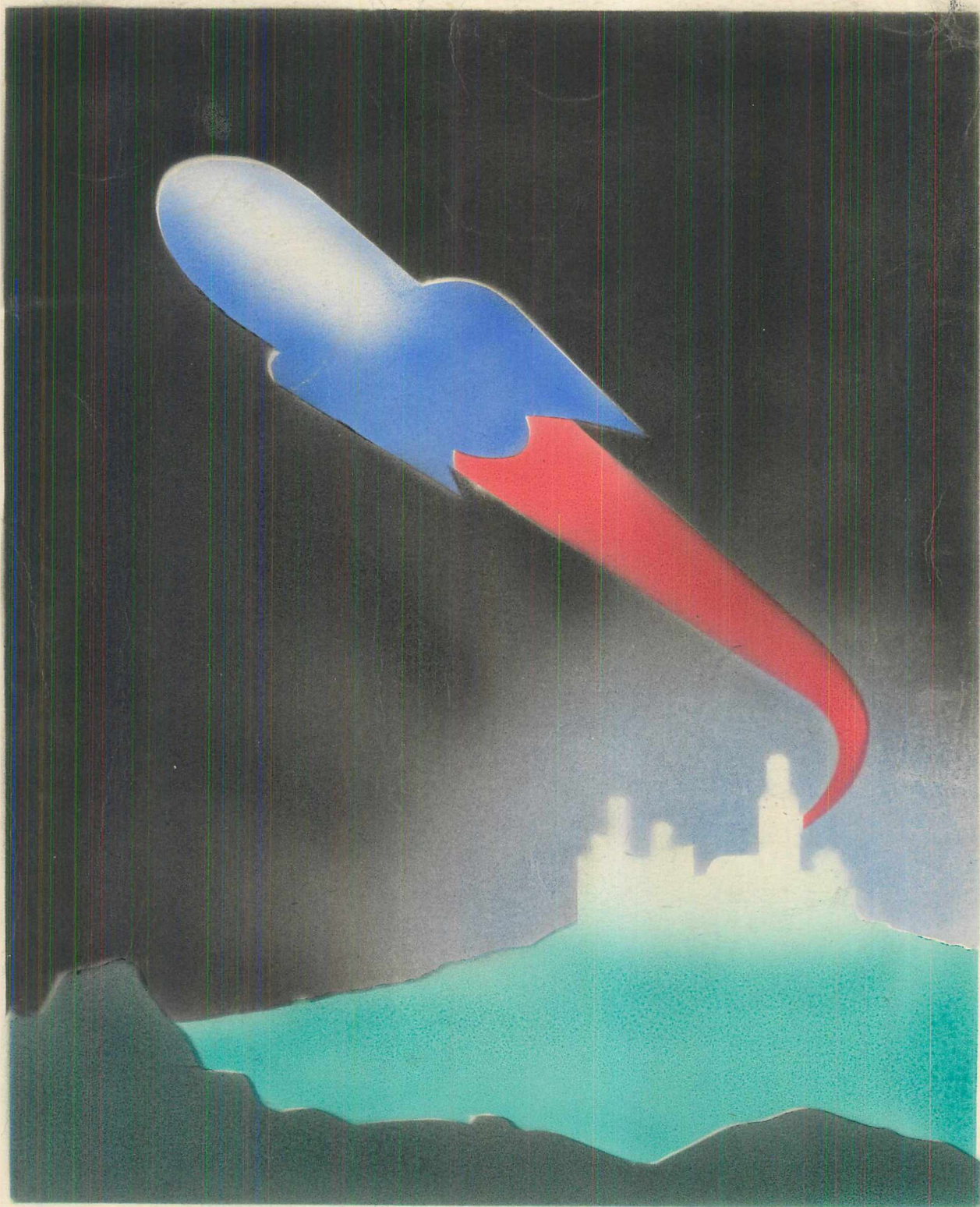


RL

G E M I N I

NO VI





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This, dear people, is Gemini. Again I repeat that it is published, on occasions, by Ron Lane, of 22 Beresford Road, Longsight, Manchester 14. This happens to be the sixth issue, and copies are liable to straggle out about January 1945. Postal orders or even common stamps are welcome - just send them to the editor. The said editor does not necessarily agree with the opinions expressed in the pure pages of his mag, and he is liable to make ingenious alterations in the many () manuscripts he receives. Or have you seen all this before?

R Lane

POEM

I saw the marsh with rushes dank and green,
And deep black pools beneath a sunset sky,
And lotus silver bright
Gleam on their blackness in the dying light
As I passed by.

And all that night I saw as in a dream
Her fair face lifted up
Shine in the darkness like a lotus cup,
Snow-white against the deep black pool of night,
Till dawn was nigh.

EDITORIAL

Some people seem worried as to how many 'G's' there have been, perhaps because we did number one issue wrongly.. got mixed up! The first issue which did not appear will not do so in the future. We have at last decided to wash it out and cut the loss. 'G' is however numbered as if that issue had appeared, so that this, the 'sixth' issue is actually the fifth published. However there is no point in changing the numbering now, and we shall not do so.

It might be mentioned that 'G' will be quarto in future, a point which distinctly amuses us.. remember certain statements on the advantages of foolscap. The number of pages is still likely to vary from issue to issue, although the envelopes will be a constant feature. You lucky people.

This issue is a bumper number - call it a New Year one - it might come out about then. In case it does, a Happy New Year to all! Thanks are again due, to 'IT' for the first three items which were ready stencilled!, and to Bruce Gaffron; we don't have to say why.

'G' is now a full-blown fanmag - it has two items by Smith! - two of the best pieces we have seen of that prolific gentleman's work. The letter column has grown to full size at last.. incidentally so has ye ed. It would be a nice touch to send this mag out on his twenty-first, and this might be possible.

Next time we expect a series of biographies to start, written by various people about varying people. Also a series dealing with the literary side of fantasy. If these go down the mag will thus have five fairly regular features, leaving room for fiction (hint) poetry and some articles perhaps. We still need artwork badly.

A note to Johnny Burke - might we nominate you to strike back at Smith in the next installment of 'Alice'? And would anyone like to write 'Dust Notes' some time in lieu of Lemot?

thine, *R. Lane*

r a t i n g s f o r 'G'-f i v e.

In order; 'When Will Wisdom Grow Up?' 8. 'Dust Notes' 7. 'In an Old Library' 6.8. 'Alice' 6.5. 'G Litter' 6.5. 'Song at Twilight' 6.3. 'Snare of Beauty' 6. 'Things and Such' 5.3. 'Problem' 5.5. 'Polymical Fan' 5. Whole issue 6.3.
The first two items were rated by all. The cover and editorial were only rated by two people, the results being useless.

THE ZOMBIE HAS NO TEETH

"If I had some teeth it wouldn't be so bad," said the Zombie mournfully. "But quite apart from the difficulty of eating there's no doubt that toothless gums and sunken cheeks make a fellow look worse than he really is. I can understand you shrinking from me at first sight."

The Vicar looked at him dubiously in the moonlight. It would, he thought, take more than a set of false teeth to make the Zombie look really handsome. But he merely said sternly: "You haven't yet explained to me what you were doing in that tomb."

"Just looking around," said the Zombie airily, "Just looking around."

"Looking around for what?" persisted the Vicar, who was a firm man and strictly opposed to unorthodox proceedings in his churchyard.

The Zombie looked embarrassed. "Well, a fellow's got to eat," he pleaded, shuffling his feet nervously.

"I do not consider that it is necessary in the slightest degree for you to eat," said the Vicar coldly.

"But it is, definitely. It is true that mere lack of food wouldn't kill me, for I can't be killed, but it would have distressing effects."

"I strongly refute the suggestion that you cannot be killed. Everything living can be killed. It is blasphemous nonsense to say otherwise."

"Ah, but you miss the point. I'm not alive. I'm dead. And nothing you can do can make me any deader," said the Zombie, leering triumphantly in the direction of the Vicar, who winced away from the strong acrid odour that came from the mouldy wrappings of the mobile corpse.

"What the dickens is that smell? Formalin?" he asked testily.

"I suppose so," said the Zombie sheepishly. "It's some proprietary brand actually, used by all the better sort of Zombies. We have an unfortunate tendency to suffer from D.B.O."

"D.B.O.?"

"Dead Body Odour."

"No wonder, if you rob graves for food. You're no better than a ghoul."

"I thought you'd say that," complained the Zombie. "It's one of those things people are always saying about us unthinkingly, not realising that we've got feelings to be hurt like anyone else. Ghouls are very inferior people indeed; they've never been alive at all whereas we've been alive and died."

"What does it feel like to die?" asked the Vicar, his curiosity getting the better of him.

The Zombie pondered thoughtfully over this for a long time. "Well - it feels sort of queer," he said at length. "A very rum sort of affair. It's not at all easy to explain. And then, of course, I didn't go all the way - never crossed the Styx at all."

The Vicar's orthodoxy was shocked. "I'm not going to believe any nonsense about the Styx, or any other Greek superstition," he said decidedly.

"It's the truth," insisted the Zombie. "Let me tell you the story of my death."

"Certainly not," said the Vicar hastily, for the Zombie had assumed the deadly aspect of a raconteur.

"Oh dear, nobody loves a Zombie," said the Zombie dolefully. "Especially me. It's not having any teeth. I had a fine set once, but I broke them on a bullet in the heart of a suicide, and I do

miss them. I was knocking about with a little vampire out of the next parish at the time -- boy, was she hot stuff! I remember one night after she'd had a go at the old Squire -- I guess his blood was about ninety-per-cent over-proof -- she came back hardly able to fly, and she says to me, she says .

"I have no interest whatsoever in the communications of your disreputable acquaintances," said the Vicar firmly.

"She's not an acquaintance any more," sighed the Zombie. "Soon as she saw me without my teeth she gave me the air."

"I think it is a very good



thing that you have no teeth. At least it preserves the flesh of some mortals from a foul end."

"You take the wrong attitude altogether," protested the Zombie. "If I don't get them the ghouls do, and in any case we do them a good turn as their spirits are earth-bound until the last trace of their bodies has vanished. Besides, it only means that I wait until natural decay has softened the flesh a bit for me, but though there are some superior foreign sort of Zombies who reckon they prefer the flavour when the meat's getting a bit gamey, I'm not very partial to it myself. Couldn't you get me a new set of teeth? I'd do the sexton's job for you for the next couple of centuries for nothing bar the perqs."

"I am quite satisfied with the present sexton, thank you," said the Vicar. "And I'll thank you to keep away from my churchyard in future, whatever dubious benefits the souls of the dead may derive from your activities."

"But you can't do that!" protested the Zombie, horrified. "I live here. Always have lived here. You wouldn't be so hard on a poor old Zombie that never hurt a living man, would you sir?"

The Vicar was touched. It did seem rather harsh on the part of a man who prided himself in looking after his parishioners to eject the oldest inhabitant. At the same time he disapproved of having a Zombie, even a toothless Zombie, at large in his churchyard. While he was trying to decide what to do for the best the still dawn air was cleft by the shrill crow of a cock. The Zombie scuttled hastily but stiffly to an open grave nearby, slid in, and began pulling the flat tombstone back into position over him. He looked pleadingly at the Vicar as he did, so that the cleric's tender heart was stirred, and he had a sudden idea.

"Just a moment before you retire," he said hurriedly. "Could you not - ah - borrow a set off a - off someone who has no further use for them?"

The Zombie's stiff, cadaverous features twisted sardonically. "You don't know your parishioners," he said cynically. "False teeth are valuable - much too valuable to be dropped in a hole in the ground. But," he added wistfully, "perhaps if you had a word with them . . ."

The Vicar was left staring thoughtfully at a flat tombstone which had obviously never been moved for hundreds of years. He sighed after a time, and moved away still deep in thought.



SOVIET FILMS

Two main facts must be borne in mind when considering the Soviet film industry - it is entirely state controlled, and it exists almost exclusively for the dissemination of Government views and policy. As a corollary, therefore, directors are not allowed complete freedom of expression, and the tendency on the part of some has thus been to treat the propaganda as a side-line, with the result that it has a 'stuck-on' naive appearance, while others treat this aspect so seriously that the whole thing becomes largely unacceptable to foreign audiences. For these reasons Soviet films have not been considered to have any commercial value in this country to date, and have generally been shown to limited audiences. As a result, certain intellectual circles have tended to regard every Soviet film as a cinematic masterpiece, and to assume that no other country's films are really worth a second glance. It is certain that the influence of Soviet cinematic technique has been enormous, particularly in America; but it is also true that many Soviet films are far from being masterpieces.

The Soviet silent film and sound film indicate very different treatment and it must be admitted that excellent though such films as Alexander Nevsky and General Suvorov are, they do not altogether bear out the promise of even greater development which was implied by the last great films of the silent era, such as Earth and The General Line.

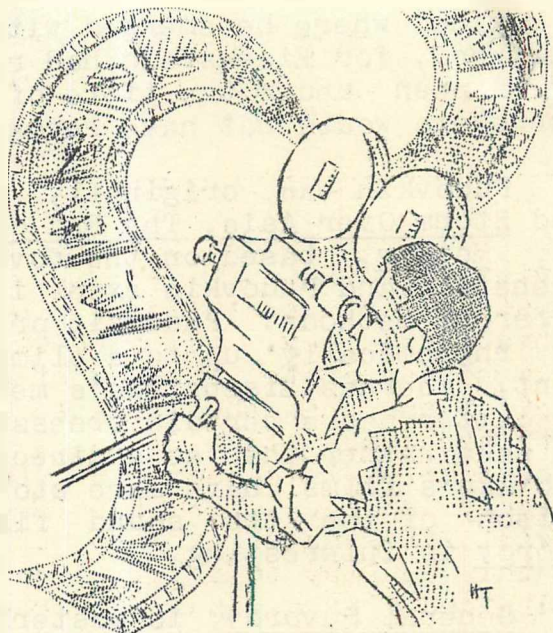
The salient point to remember is that in Russian eyes it is the putting together or montage of the film that counts - the actors are subordinate, the most important person being the director. It seems that the art of montage was first developed through the shortage of stock in early post-revolution days, with the result that many experiments in cutting and fitting of odd pieces of film in rhythmic juxtaposition were made.

As an example of Russian methods of heightening the dramatic content of a scene a director might do something like this. A young girl combs her hair, her head bent forward. She flings back her hair. Nothing to the scene? No, but the sweep of the hair flying back over her head is photographed in slow motion, and cut into the ordinary speed of the other movements. The effect is to transform an ordinary act into a thing of grace.

One might suggest that since most subjects were of a documentary nature efforts were made to present them as interestingly as possible. A lot of us can remember the incredibly dull documentary films of the silent days, and no doubt the Soviet authorities were well aware of the propaganda value of making their stuff palatable, for above all they have always considered the film as a means of education.

From this state of affairs a number of directors have emerged with whose names even the ordinary filmgoer should be familiar. Eisenstein and Pudovkin are the best known in this country, and there will be little room in this short account to deal with many others.

Eisenstein has been the subject of more than one controversy, starting with the famous Battleship Potemkin in 1925, which was not shown over here until many years later. It evoked a certain disappointment in many minds, as the technique had been superseded by later works of its director. Eisenstein's culminating work of the silent era was The General Line dealing with the establishment of collective farming, and the influence of mechanisation on the land. His love of crowd scenes is well known and the satirised religious procession in this film is one of his best examples of crowd handling. Memorable also is a scene in which, the local peasant lads having acquired a bull, the whole village turns out to see it perform. The climax was indicated by quick shots mounting in rapidity, and ending in a series of alternating red and yellow flashes.



Shortly after the advent of sound Eisenstein made a short, The Silver Lining (Romance Sentimentale), of unparalleled beauty. This picture of moods was probably the most exquisite thing of its type to reach the screen. It was a study in rhythm and photographic tone values combined with an emotional appeal of unusual uplift. The scenes could not have been presented by any other means than the film: it was the apotheosis of cinema. The music was specially composed by Archangel'sky. No one who saw the film will easily forget the opening shots taken from a moving camera pointed at the tops of trees flashing past; the upward swing of the picture as it rose to meet the trees falling in the direction of the screen; the clever cross cutting of waves lashing on rocks, the change of tempo and mood to rain falling on a twilit pool; the slow move of the camera to a lighted window and through the window; the soft dissolve of the rain against the glass; a woman singing at the piano, while a Great Dane, photographed in semi-slow motion, arose with rippling grace to cross the room. Then there were the swift angle shots of statues in the Rodin Museum, Paris. This is what is meant by saying that the promise of those earlier films is not wholly realised in Alexander Nevsky, for in The Silver Lining Eisenstein applied to a sound picture the technique of the silent film at its zenith.

Eisenstein once left Russia to go to America. They sent him

to Mexico where he emerged with miles of film, later edited in Hollywood, for Eisenstein had returned to Russia. It finally saw the screen under the title of Thunder Over Mexico. Undoubtedly Eisenstein would not have recognised it.

Pudovkin was originally a chemical engineer. One calls to mind Storm Over Asia, The End of St. Petersburg and, best known of all, Mother, based on the novel by Maxim Gorki. Although both Eisenstein and Pudovkin excel in crowd scenes, both directors use different methods. Pudovkin prefers a series of cross shots working rhythmically up to a climax in order to emphasise a single point, whereas Eisenstein's methods are broader. One feels that the latter has a certain obsession with masses of people for their own sake rather than as a direct pointer to the story. In general Pudovkin's films have more story value, and in this respect comparison of the two sound films Alexander Nevsky and General Suvorov is interesting.

General Suvorov is masterly in every way and reaches great dramatic heights. The story of Byron's 'little odd, old man' is one that would undoubtedly appeal to the Soviet government, for Suvorov was a democrat, a general who ate porridge with his troops and had little time for ceremony or parades. The film deals with his clash with the Czar Paul I, who reintroduced old type uniforms and meticulous drilling. These scenes are well conceived. One is reminded of old prints of hussars drilling in barrack squares; in fact the resemblance seems too uncanny to be entirely coincidental. The acting of N. Cherkasov as Suvorov and A. Yachnitsky as Paul I is impeccable. By comparison the interminable scenes of crowds moving and bells ringing in Alexander Nevsky grew a little wearisome.

Mention must be made of Dovjenko, whose silent film Earth, dealing with the clash between the old methods of farming and the new, was held by some critics to be the best of all Soviet silent films.

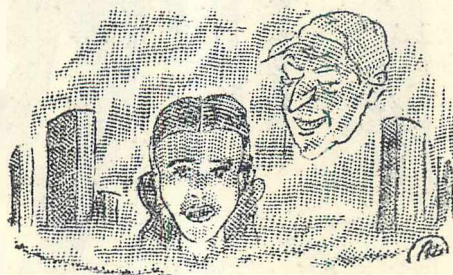
Dovjenko is a Ukrainian and his pictures are not easy to understand. Indeed, I found that I could not make head or tail of Earth until the third time of viewing. But its pictorial beauty, particularly the final scenes of rainfall on apples, was never in question. Each scene was a carefully thought out composition, exploiting the full value of panchromatic stock. It was what one would expect from an artist who had studied film technique.

It would appear that, with the experimental point of view characterising Soviet films, some attention would have been paid to the pure fantasy film. Efforts such as Zvenigora by Dovjenko, dealing with Ukrainian mysticism, come within this category but Paul Rotha in The Film Till Now points out that the folk legends on which it is based are incomprehensible to any but Ukrainians. In 1919-20 the Mejrabdom-Russ Company produced a large scale Martian fantasy called Aelita, based on the novel by Count Alexi Tolstoi and acted by players of the Moscow Arts Theatre. Little

is known of it however and it has not been shown in this country. But there is little doubt that with the imaginative outlook of Russian directors and their bold conceptions, the medium of the Soviet film would lend itself to fantasy - and more than fantasy, science fiction. No doubt academic films on applied science have been made but for obvious reasons, such as the language difficulty, their appeal would be limited to a very select few in other countries. But consider how the experiments of Professor Pavlov could be fitted into a brilliant story centering around the conditioned reflex! This however is pure speculation and we shall have to wait in patience. The implication to be drawn is that if science films are made for entertainment by the Soviet film industry, they will deal more with facts than fiction.

Finally, to essay a personal opinion, I must state in all fairness that an undiluted diet of Soviet films would pall on me after a time, but there is no gainsaying the artistic value of the productions, and towering head and shoulders above all else, is their sincerity and tremendous vitality. To deny the films of other countries however, would be foolish, as well as prejudiced, particularly when one remembers Un Carnet de Bal, Fantasia or Things To Come.

THE HIGH PRIEST



An old man was her only guide that night.
The drums of thunder rolled; and drenching rain
Soaked his gnarled face. A stab of flaring light
Caught his bright eyes. He stopped and spoke the name
Of that black spot of evil in the hill,
Where Druids once had raised the sacred blade
And chanted as they watched the red blood spill
From out the fair white form of some Welsh maid.

She glimpsed the altar in the lightnings glare
Beyond his pointing finger; and then stood
Affrighted ----- for around that stone sat there
Were crouching figures, garbed in cloak and hood.
The old man cackled. "Offer up your life!"
And lightning glittered on his swift drawn knife.

Arthur Hillman



nightmare

A pretty smile

A lovely torso

Can make a friendly

Feeling moreso.

FANTASY & POETRY

A much neglected branch of fantasy is that of the poetic. References are occasionally seen in the fan press to some few of the many pieces of fantasy poetry, and even perhaps to the several epics based on myth. Yet if it comes to a question of the age of fantasy literature these last are usually ignored in favour of Lucian of Samothrace. Despite the fact that myth is undoubtedly fantasy and undoubtedly antedates the said Lucian.

In the form of ballad and song derived from the earliest myth lore fantasy has been present since man first learnt speech.. indeed I shall be surprised if most of my readers did not beguile time away in their childhood with tales derived from the great poetry of myth: stories of volsung and valkyrie, of the Asa & Vana gods, of Siegfried and Dietrich, Beowulf and Grendel, Lotan, Thor and Mjollnir, Cuchullain, Rustum, Arthur, Galahad and Lancelot, & all the Greek and Roman pantheon of god and hero. A mighty host, & part of man's earliest literature.

The heroic sagas from which these tales are derived have all their glamour and more, and must be regarded as unquestionably part of the fantasy field. The primitive myth has given rise to much poetry first to the various national epics, as the Iliad & Odyssey, Nibeluhg Lied, Waiskringla, and then to similar but more recent works as Paradise Lost and Porte d'arthur. Even the Faerie Queen owes something to myth.

There is of course much poetry inferior only because of lack of length to the epics, but which owes its inspiration to the same sources. It is hardly necessary to mention Coleridge and Keats, and Morris and Tennyson have written much, especially on the Arthurian legends. Indeed it would be hard to name a great poet who has not written some fantasy. In the weird field Poe is supreme - as far above Lovecraft as the latter is above Hamilton. In fact, I see nothing worthy of praise in Lovecraft's poetry.

I mentioned the Faerie Queen. This poem especially is a delicious fantasy, and well worth reading, despite the slightly archaic English. It is one of the few narrative poems that owe little to myth, and it is a wholly delightful hodge-podge of knights and beautiful ladies, princes and dragons, magicians and strange adventures - not to mention a Platant Feast! It will in part be familiar to many via Unknown and Sprague de Camp's rather free (?) interpretation of it. A poetry of faerie lands, with a decided & pleasant flavour of Arthurian chivalry. One cannot but revel in it.

And I at the moment cannot do better than quote Hazlitt "...In reading the Faerie Queen, you see a little withered old man by a wood-side opening a knicket, a giant and a dwarf lagging behind, a

damsel on a boat upon an enchanted lake, woodnymphs and satyrs: & all of a sudden you are transported into a lofty palace, with tapestries burning, amidst knights and ladies, with dance and revelry, and song, 'and mask, and antique pageantry'.

DUST MOTES

In a careless moment one of the correspondents of this magazine suggested the topic of the intelligence of women in relation to that of men as a possible subject for this column. Along with doubtless many others of my sex I had long assumed the superiority of the male over the female in matters mental; an assumption only investigated and dragged down to the conscious level by the suggestion mentioned.

To quote Virginia Woolfe; '...she let it uphold her and sustain her, this admirable fabric of the masculine intelligence, which ran up and down, crossed this way and that, like iron girders spanning the swaying fabric, upholding the world, so that she could trust herself utterly to it, even shut her eyes, or flicker them for a moment, as a child staring up from its pillow winks at the myriad layers of the leaves of a tree..'

Flattering as this may be, it does seem probable that the vast majority of women assume consciously or unconsciously their inferiority; and traditionally the male is the 'support' of the female. This is not to say clever women are lacking, but until comparatively recently it has been the exceptional woman who has gained her way to the ranks of the intelligentsia - using this word in the Russian sense. Even now men far outnumber women in the professions, although the position is rapidly changing especially with the onset of this war. Typists, secretaries, etc. are drawn largely from the ranks of the country's womanhood, & whatever the numerous faults of the Soviet system the Russians have made full use of the innate intelligence of their women. The difference is still great where high qualities of intellect are required, as evinced in the proportions of the sexes who graduate from the Universities, but there are still many women who have attained co-status with their male colleagues and who are ranked among the top in their respective fields - Professor Stebbing & Dr. Marie Stopes spring to mind. On the literary side there are many famous women authors; Glasgow, the Brontes, Virginia Woolfe, Mrs. Gaskell, Willa Cather, George Eliot, and many more. Although the best cannot compare with Flaubert or Dostoevsky; nor can I think of any feminine name to put beside Keats.

But beyond all this women have much less opportunity to 'make good' than have men, for a woman with child and husband cannot devote her life to literature or science. And few girls are encouraged to look for other than a home in life. I do not think

that women will ever take the place of men in the leadership of this world, I do not even think they will attain absolute equality with men; but I do think that individual women will to a rapidly increasing extent make great contributions to the culture of mankind.

I do not belittle women hereby. I have no reason to believe that the innate intelligence of the two sexes differs to any important degree. But a woman's instinct lies elsewhere than that of a man, and it is quite obvious that the sexes have differing abilities and if only for that reason differing tasks in this life.

News has reached the writer via the august pages of 'Fido', that the Welcoming Committee of the National Fantasy Fan Federation has produced a booklet designed to attract people into the ranks of fandom. This must be commemorated in rhyme - and so:

How doth the little fantasite
Involve itself a tale
And print its creed on paper white
To lure a curious male.

Now cheerfully he seems to grin
Now sweetly write his paws
To entice careless people in -
to fandoms depths and chores.

For performing rites apply Lemot, c/o Editor, Gemini.

While on matters pertaining to fandom one might mention the BFS. I noted a while back some scheme for amalgamating the three libraries now existant in England - there is much to be said for the scheme. The BFS library itself appears to me an inefficiently run affair, especially when contrasted with the old S F Exchange. This leads me to wonder whether any amalgamation will be an improvement? It is to be hoped so; and a keen librarian could make it so. But I confess my cynicism. Another point concerning the library: by what right is it restricted to BFS members? I know for a fact that at least two non-members have contributed material to it, yet they are not permitted to use it; although I believe that neither wishes to do so. But the question is one of principle; the magazines were donated to a library (the SFE) which has been appropriated by the BFS. There was no debate as to whether it was right or wrong to transfer the library, and the restriction of the 'borrowed' library was again an arbitrary affair. Just one more mark against the society!

Some weeks ago I set out from home with the intention of visiting Epstein's 'Consummation Eat', which had recently arrived in town; and eventually I located it by some blatant posters that were smeared carelessly over the windows of what had late been a 'Pinkobolic' Free Gift Shop'. Perhaps one could expect no better from the promoters of posters as those of which I reproduce the following text:

'Is it Art or is it Shocking?'
'Straight from Leicester Square' (a lie)
'Four-and-a-half Ton Colossus!'
'You'll be Shocked - but you'll be Thrilled!'

I wanted to see the sculpture badly; but those posters decided me otherwise. I had no intention of putting any money into the hands of the sponsors of the exhibition; perhaps an irrational attitude, but my disgust overruled all else.

Such insensate commercialism will effectively educate the public away from art even more than that 'art' which is intended to appeal as pornography. A French name on a book is now sufficient to assure a sale, and any mucky little shop will contain Maupassant or Baudelaire... Boccaccio has thus become a favourite. My one consolation is that John Public must often be disappointed in his search for pornography among the classics; or am I being too kind? I had blamed those who catered the jaded appetites of the large minority, but now I feel vileness to be part of man.

- - - - -

For a Government which urges (for purely altruistic reasons of course) an increase in the birth rate the houses it recommends are mystifyingly impractical. While the exterior appearance is often attractive, and the kitchen an apparently efficient arrangement (I, a mere male, dare not assert myself on that point), it seems that the houses are built for a couple and child at the most. (This reminds me of an fully funny joke -there was an ad. in the 'Tribune' not long ago, to the effect that a couple wanted lodgings; 'an intellectual couple with two Botticellian children!') These erections may be houses, but they are not homes. Yet they could be the latter - Sweden and many continental countries have built beautiful and practical homes via prefabrication, but here.. By now the public is convinced that prefabricated houses are made of steel sheets that will rust in winter and last ten years. They must also have an eight foot ceiling. So the brickmakers will still make a little pin money.

- - - - -

Soon it will be the sixth wartime Christmas. Probably we shall see seven Christmases before this war is over. When it started I was a little kid just leaving school. That seems a very long time ago, and much has happened since. I then thought war rather an adventure; singing soldiers and bright bayonets. Guns an unromantic accessory. Spitfires the mounts of new knights. War has its romance and drama, and as James says mankind needs its moral equivalent if it is to manage without it; with the onset of war whole nations discover immediate unity, and life has at last a purpose. If there is any basic reason for war it is this moral uplift that is that reason - not economics. War calls forth the noblest of mans' sentiments, and therefore is acquiesced in. Man needs an outlet for his emotions and a cause to sacrifice himself for; and war can only be avoided if the daemon is satiated in some other great enterprise of the human race that calls for the same spirit of community. And because man must progress Utopia is impossible; for it means the ideal is.

ALICE IN THRILLING WONDER-LAND

-- part two --

Matchless the fans might be, but amongst them there was a total of fifteen cigarette lighters, one of which worked.

"Well?", said the startled caterpillar. "What now?" Who did you say you were?"

The assembly turned bright red in the face and shuffled its feet nervously, refusing to meet the worm's quizzical gaze.

"They call themselves fantasy fans," explained Alice.

"Why?" asked the Caterpillar.

"God knows" said Smith. "The word fan is supposed to be an abbreviation of the word fanatic, implying that we are fanatically devoted to fantasy. Actually several of us are hardly interested in fantasy at all, and if you ask me the majority have not enough guts to be fanatically interested in staying alive even."

The speech was punctuated by a shrill whistle as he departed at speed, leaving indignation behind.

"What's biting him anyway?" asked the Caterpillar.

"Oh, he didn't want to come," explained Johnny Furke. "He doesn't like crowds. Only Ron Lane shanghaied him by making him drunk on half a pint of wallop."

"So? But what is fantasy?" said the Caterpillar, pursuing his original train of thought.

"This is fantasy," said the great collector Michael Rosenblum, producing a brightly covered volume from his pocket. The Caterpillar opened it, and began reading from just inside the cover.

"A is the author of this book,
Beautiful the check he got for the muck.
Ci-dessous the crimson cover you'll find
Definite proof of a demented mind.
Easily the words flowed from his pen,
Futility never written down till then.
Gibberish, garbage, gabble and guff;
Hideous hackery, half-baked stuff;
Inept, inane, idiotic bunk;
Jollip, jargon, jumble and joll;..."

His voice was drowned in a chorus of wrathful yelps from admirers of the author in question. "It's that Smith again!" was the burden of the nattering. "Sue him for libel!"

"I protest!", cried Burke indignantly. "Do you think Smith is the only fan with critical instincts? I've been fighting this stupid idolatry of that sap for years. His tastes are rotten, anyway - he prefers Beethoven to Mozart!"

"But who did write it if he didn't?" asked Ron Lane with startling acumen.

"I did", said Burke belligerently. "A wanna make sumpin of it?"

"Well - it's not very good poetry is it?" put in Alice pacifically.

"Too right it isn't," agreed the Caterpillar, whose mother had been frightened by a kangaroo. "But I don't suppose any of them know the diff."

"Oh yes they do," said Arthur Willman promptly. "I know a good deal about poetry."

"Oh yes?" said the Caterpillar in sceptical tones. "Let's hear you recite 'You are old, Father William'."

"You are old Father Sloane", the young fan said,
And Amazing has gone down the slot;
Don't you think it is time you pushed off to bed,
And stopped printing all this rot?"

"Truly" quoth the Doctor, "thou hast spake good sooth,
Though I wis ye have not judged well;
For eftsoons the future will bring great ruth,
And Amazing under RAP will smell."

"That's not right," said the Caterpillar severely almost before Arthur had stopped.

"Not right be damned," said Smith, reappearing suddenly on the other side of the mushroom. "Inever heard truer words in my life!"

The offended caterpillar promptly started to crawl away, and though it was pleaded with to return it relented only far enough to say ungraciously:

"One side will take you forward and one side will take you back."

"One side of what?" asked Michael.

"Of the mushroom," bawled the retreating Caterpillar.

"But it's round" said Parker with scientific acuteness.

"Gerraat?" said Smith, "whatsamarra witcho? There's my side and your side. I'll break a wacking great noggin off this side for all of us, and one of you lot get me a bit from that side... see?" and so it was arranged. The mob split into two sections and each section ate from a different side. In no interval they were facing each other again, both sides looking badly shaken.

"Well?" said Gus gently to Frank Parker of the other section. "You went forward I presume? How did you make out?"

"We went to the end of the world," said Frank, "or at least to the end of humanity, for the world still looked much the same. All the men were dead, only six young women were left alive, but because there were no men the race was doomed."

He paused, and on his face was an expression of infinite sadness, as if one of those innermost ideals had been shattered. Gus looked puzzled.

"But?" and he looked round apprehensively to make sure Alice wasn't in hearing "but - well - wasn't this your big moment....? I mean - well, you know what I mean...?"

Frank looked infinitely sad as he looked back on that future scene. "They were short and fat and curvy," he said wearily. "They waddled when they walked, and they were pimply and freckled and had complexions the colour of mud, and their voices were like the creaking of a rusty hinge, and they didn't talk - they opened their mouths and let the breeze blow their tongues about, and they were bad-tempered, and they had straggly moustaches and halitosis and O.O., and their ankles were as far round as their knees and..."

"O.K., O.K.," said Gus sympathetically. "You came back."

"You said it - we returned," agreed Frank sadly. "But how did you get on in the past?"

It was Gus's turn to look down his nose. "Brother," he said earnestly, "you had a bit of a shock, but nothing to what we had. When we picked ourselves up we found ourselves on the slope of a hill. It was raining like the devil, and just in front of us was a big wooden boat resting on the ground. But - and I wouldn't say a word about it if the others hadn't been there and seen the same thing - this is what shook us. Up the gangway into the ship animals were going in pairs - two elephants, two lions, two tigers, two rabbits, - two of everything you could think of. And an old gentleman in a nightgown and a long white beard, accompanied by a couple of hefty looking younger chaps, came up to us and looked us over critically and said "I don't know what these are, boys, but we'd better have a couple of 'em in with the rest, otherwise they might get mad at us a GTC."

"I see," said Frank.... "You came back."

"We returned," agreed Gus.

The fans had been wandering on through the forests as they talked, and at that moment they came to the edge of a large clearing. In the centre of it a vast monolith of some inky-black stone stabbed a hundred feet up towards the sky from the level grass, a portentous parallelopiped lurching threateningly towards them..... Even as they looked their nerves were further disturbed by a series piping over a singularly wide range and a large mass of green jolly rolled across the clearing.

"A shoggoth!" gasped someone, and all was confusion as they tried to get behind each other. The shoggoth apparently did not notice them, and rolled up to the monolith, and knocked on the side with a stone it carried in one pseudopod, and piped "Tekelli-li! Tekelli-li!"

"Isn't it pretty," said Alice in innocent admiration.

"Tekelli-li! Tekelli-li!" piped the shoggoth, knocking again. A door was flung open and there appeared the formidable quaintness of one of the Elder Ones.

"Alright, alright, alright!" it said testily. "I heard you the first time."

"For Joe Fann," piped the shoggoth, producing a huge envelope which it solemnly handed the other. "An invitation from Ackerman, to a Convention."

"From Ackerman," said the Elder One solemnly taking the envelope. "An invitation to Joe Fann for a Convention."

"You got it bud," said the shoggoth and piped off. The Elder One promptly tore the invitation into a dozen pieces and tossed them to the breeze, an act of sacrilege which brought the fans across the clearing with a rush.

"You can't do that!" they yapped.

"I've done it," said the Elder One blandly.

"But Joe won't know Ackerman wants him to go," said Arthur Willman.

"So what?" said the Elder One. "Joe'll go anyway. Joe'd go if the thing was held in haunted Innsmouth, or on the Plateau of Leng, or in R'lyeh below the Pacific, or in the Vale of Inath, where the ghouls of the world cast their lovers', or in Yuggoth of the Outer Dark, or at the home of the frightful Mi-Go, or even in Manchester on a wet Sunday afternoon."

"I'll stick one on you if you talk about Manchester like that," said Ron Lan., somewhat incensed, but he was ignored in favour of Michael's notion that they tell Joe Fann about the Convention. Gus Willmorth rapped politely on the door.

"Useless to knock," said the Elder One comfortably, revealing that he had been an elephant (special joke for Johnny Burke) /??!/" "For one thing I'm on the same side of the door as you are, & for another even if I was inside I couldn't hear you - there's too much noise. Also if you knock as hard as that you'll knock the door down!"

And indeed at that moment, the door, which was only made of cardboard, fell down, and the curious fans crowded through into a room full of furious activity. Joe, seven feet tall and eighteen inches wide, was striding up and down dictating at great speed to three typists. Each typist had two machines, for they were the four-armed green women of Mars, and four of the machines were cutting stencils, while the other two wrote letters. As fast as a stencil was finished it was snatched up in the mandibles of a giant spider and rushed to the rear of the room where a gang of assorted monstrosities were duplicating, stapling, and wrapping the results at a high speed.

"That-ho!" said Burke appreciatively. "Now we know where FAPA comes from!"

GEMINI LITTER

Mr Smith commences with a quick one-two one-two "...the best that can be said for the cover is that it is maybe a little better than a blank sheet of paper but not much. I gather that the cover is but an emergency effort to carry us through while we wait for Bruce Caffron's, an event to which I look forward with great interest.

I agree with most of Aiken's remarks on the parlous state of fandom, & also agree that it could be transformed into a more mature sort of affair/yeah/. But I am disappointed in that his article peters out just when it was beginning to be interesting, without putting forward any definite 'high aims' for our consideration. The nearest he comes to this is when he says fantasy 'may..become a great art-form or philosophy, even perhaps a science or religion' - but he leaves us there, with four alternatives to choose from as possibilities, without even the promise that one of them must be the right one. Now all the points he mentions about fandom have been argued before ad nauseam /swelme/, but no one, as yet, to my knowledge, has proposed a definite course of action (ignoring the sporadic outbursts of young politicians of course) to break down the 'vicious circle of futility and irreverence' /so sorry - should be 'irrelevance!/' - and neither does Aiken.... My own ideas on the subject are, roughly, that fantasy is a branch of literature, an

art therefore, in which science and philosophy can find aesthetic expression, that it is therefore capable of propounding new truths and expressing old ones in new forms, and that it could therefore become a form of art as useful and as fitting to the modern world as, say, Gothic architecture was to the Middle Ages. / Let us hear you on this subject people/.

'Alice' has got to be good if it can stand the inevitable comparison with 'Alicia in Wonderland'! I don't like the way you have started in the middle of the story so to speak. /Must apologise - 'twas but an introduction to the theme tho/

With regard to the editorial /that me folks/ and proposal for double columns I wish to repeat lunch's advice to those about to get married - don't. /To a Certain Person - ignore this ol' boy / In my experience double columns are rather irritating in a fan-mag - the eye has to flick to an fro too quickly. /See an alibi.. they aren't practical in any case/

The best I can say of 'Song at Twilight' is that it makes equal sense read front to back or vicky verky. The jerky style is only satisfactory for short conversations - as Mr. Dingle in 'Pickwick Papers' /Dickens only decent book. But this is high praise!/

I admire the sheer length of Julian Farn's dissertation on the nude, but I can't see that he said anything that David McIlwain didn't say in a much shorter space. /And this is Smith with knobs on/. The odds and ends department at the end of this article amused me.

The readers column is improving rapidly. I would prefer you to underline your editorial cracks /?/ so as to make it easier to pick out the wheat from the chaff. /Voici/

'The Snare of Beauty' rhymes allright and seems to scan allright too, but lacks sincerity. The very first line reveals that the emotion is purely synthetic - Arthur's idea of what a poet ought to feel rather than what Arthur feels himself. Compare Rupert Brooke's 'The Great Lover' & note the genuine note in his catalogue of beautiful things he has loved.

/Last round.!!/ I must refuse to assess the merits or other -- of 'Dust Notes' while your contributor remains anonymous! Your scribe does not wish to be involved in mutual recriminations' - why? Because he hasn't the guts to say to anybody's face what he says behind their back. /Ye ed just makes it for the count of nine. Now/

The Politeness of Liverpool. '...Cover...well..... /exactly/ when ill...' John's remarks seem to pivot on a desire to have fans pass out of the stage of being fans...Fren Laney points out that fans do and should pass out of the stage of being a fan. He points out that most (U) top fans hardly bother to read fantasy these days /Gunno about that/ but are held by the things which have grown out of the original hobby; friendships, writing, publishing etc. /The situation is paralled over here.. This is very much the same as saying that when a fan grows up in John's sense, he ceases to be a fan in the true sense of the word /Which is..?/ If John will realise that fanning is but a stage, he cannot possibly expect the stage to grow up, but he can expect the individual fan to pass on to a higher stage - but never collectively. /Often just never!/

And Arthur Williams: '...I am in agreement with Doc Aiken in most of his points, but would like to point out that if, as 'fans grew up they 'took their fantasy more seriously' they would no longer be growing up but would be frozen static at a slightly higher intellectual level - which is illogical. Either they will continue to 'grow up' to the stage where their knowledge of fantasy has reached saturation point & then leave the field through lack of interest, or they will retrogress /?/, in which case they will not have been really growing up! But I contend that no fan with enough interest in outside affairs to see fantasy in its true perspective, can retain enough interest in fantasy to seriously put his mind to any organisation designed to make commercial magazines print better stories. /True; but you (and others) seem to have missed the point. Take my own case: I'm interested in the cultural /literate side of fantasy - in authors as Machen & Blackwood, in the philosophy of Stapledon. I imagine that John was thinking on similar lines; not of the resurrection of the happily decaying corpse of magazine fiction. To me SF is but an introduction to fandom, among the ranks of which I can find those who share my views.

Benson Herbert, notorious for many things - dilates on a certain problem which two people answered: '...Let the three men be A, B, & C. Then A thinks; if anyone saw 2 greens he would know he had a blue, but all hesitate, so no one sees 2 greens, hence everyone must see at least one blue; consequently there must at least two blues (for if only one blue, the one who had it would see two greens). Hence there cannot be more than one green, & if B & C saw 1 green, that one would know he had a blue but they hesitate so A knows that neither B nor C can see any green hence A himself has no green; it follows they all have blues; so A knows & we know why he knows!

And another problem - easy this time! / '... In the postwar anarchist revolution, JMR sets up a dictatorship on the lines of the BES/ in Leeds, & throws three condemned men into a ditto cell for refusing to sub. to 'Fido'. The cell is triangular in shape, with a chair in each of the three corners. Each man is bound to one of the chairs, facing inwards so that he can see the centre of the cell where a domed cover rests on a pedestal. Each man can also see under the other two chairs but not under his own chair.

JMR with a malevolent grin raises the domed cover for a moment so that the three men can see two (atomic) bombs resting on the pedestal: then he hides the bombs by replacing the cover. JMR then blindfolds the men & tells them that he intends to do one of three things: either he will leave the bombs where they are, or take one bomb out & put it under one chair, or take two bombs out & put them under two chairs. He will then replace the cover so that none can see how many bombs were left on the pedestal.

Finally JMR will remove the blindfolds: & the man who can say within five minutes whether or not he has a bomb under his chair will be privileged by the choice of being executed or of receiving free issues of 'Fido' all his life.

JMR walks round the cell several times so that no one can discover by listening what he is doing, then he removes the blindfolds. After five minutes one of the men, who happens to be a non-

fan & therefore a little brighter than the rest, whispers to JMR the answer. How does he know? And what does he know?... The fact that the solver still prefers execution is irrelevant to the answer

Arthur Hillman dit: '..The pocket-sized format of the new 'G' is swell; better to my mind than Quarto even. The design /wait'll /designer D/ reads this! / on the cover is well - peculiar. If its symbolism signifies that jazz is a maze of confusion I indignant-ly repudiate the subtle innuendo. /But it doesn't/ John Mitken's article was skillfully conceived, true to fact, & excellently written, as is all the work of his which has met my eye. Such dignified & sober /what does one infer from this last/ pieces merit reprinting & retention over the years..The gem of the issue! 'Alice' .. an old idea, but well worth reviving. The humour was quite good, & the introduction of BES personalities promises added attraction. /I am not a BES personality/

'In an Old Library'. I have a weakness for such rare & delicate verse. Please continue reprinting poetry - if it has this beautiful quality. 'Dust Notes' was good. The idea of a regular columnist is a worthy one, and here we have one of high calibre, whose observations are dignified & perceptive. /Like mine/ Please preserve his anonymity, & let us hear him on subjects that need ventilation.. /I hereby inaugurate the Case of Smith v. Hillman/... 'G' litter is excellent entertainment as always, but needs expanding, to twice its length.

Don Houston explains an allegory: '..Then as to my 'article.' I feel rather a fool being forced to explain the allegory..The bear is fandom; in fact the whole re presents my impression of fandom in words, tho not in direct discussion. It is, you realise, a delicate theme...

All the irrelevances are but the irrelevances of the brethren. The body of the article serves mainly to give support to the nucleus, & fill up space. /Hane! / Similarly the body of fandom as compared to its nucleus - the Rosenblums, /Gawd! is there more than 12/ the Williams, & dare I say it, the Lanes. /a knob of greater gifts/ The futility of the bear is the futility of the others. Both are commendably active, but to no useful purpose. Unless you count the enjoyment provided to spectators.' /Anyone want DH's address? ! But this should satisfy several people..

Harry Turner. '...I can't refrain from saying the cover 'Jazz' stinks. As an abstract composition I fear it contains little of the vitality and improvisation which surely is the essence of jazz - just a baroque collection of lines without form or significance'

Wile Gordon Holbrow gripes: '..The right-hand' edge annoys me - it might look tidy but it makes reading _____ difficult, and, (with all due respect) fanmags shouldn't be made more difficult for the reader than need be. /So... I rather like that crack. You get such strange words as unhum on one line and -an on the next. /Strange? Read Vom!/ To overcome this you can shove in extra spaces. Then you get great gaps which produce an effect to my mind /?/ like swallowing junks of air. /Shorry! /