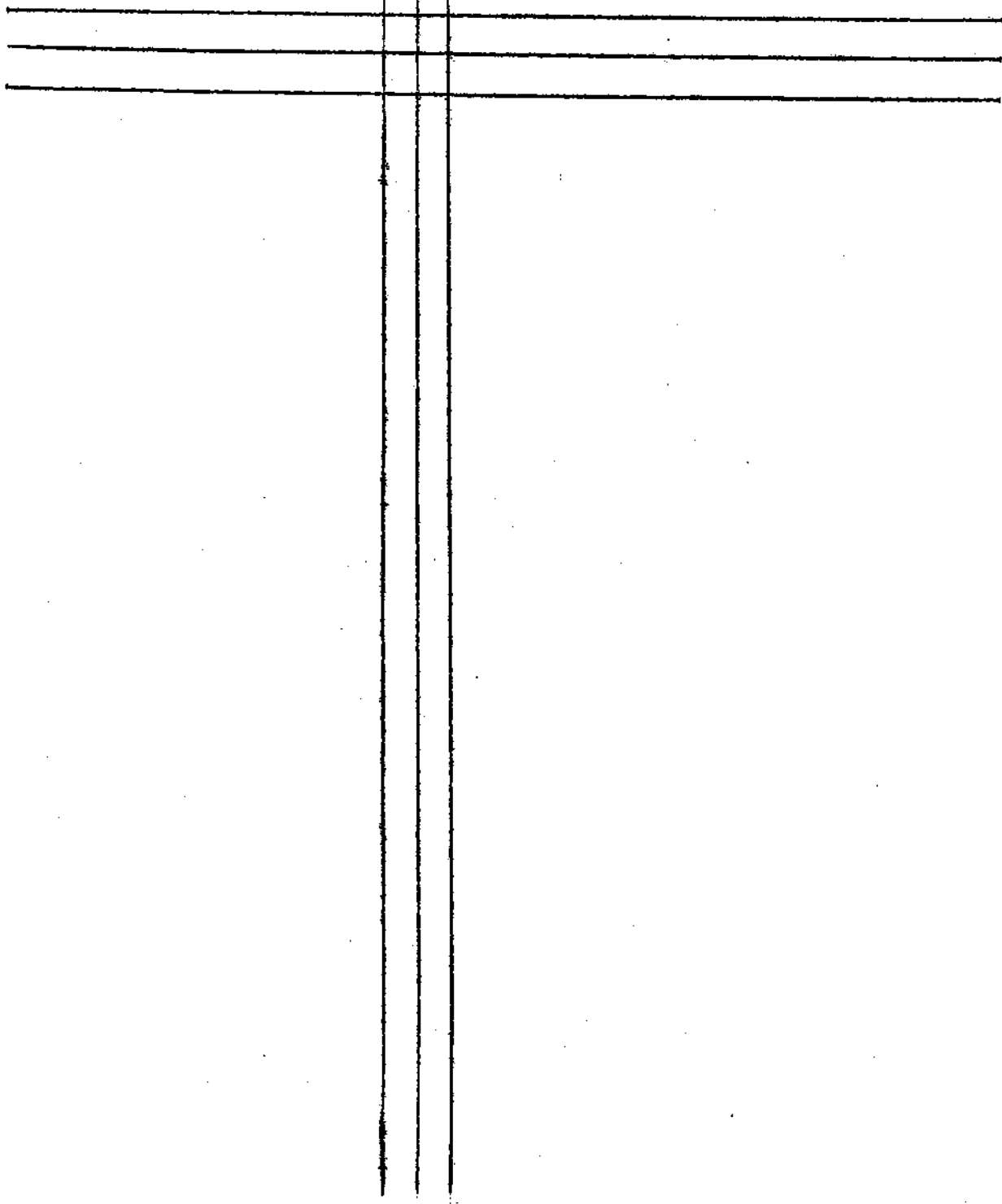


G E M I N I



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This is the seventh issue of GEMINI, dated May 1945, and published by Ron Lane at 22, Beresford Road, Manchester 13, England. This is an amateur, non-profit publication, there being nothing I can do about this last. No payment is made for material published herein as the editor hasn't got any money. In any case it is his private opinion that he should be paid for publishing the stuff. Publication is irregular, and the price per issue is SIXPENCE. Exchange terms are welcomed with other amateur mags. The editor reserves the right to edit material as he sees fit.

RL

EDITORIAL

DUE to the last minute cancellation of an item intended for this issue I find myself with two pages to fill instead of the usual one. There was a time when I should have welcomed the excuse to double my outpourings, but now the opportunity occurs I know not what to write on - unless I manage to ramble on in this fashion for the odd page!

An uneasy conscience dictates that I apologise to numerous people to whom I owe a letter, or even letters. I am afraid that in many cases there is little to be done about this matter - what correspondence I have left is conducted by scribbled PC's as it is. The only excuse I can think of is the increased fugiting of tempus during my spare time. Some day, when GEMINI has disappeared from the ken of fen (I like that) things will improve.

As to GEMINI itself - it is not likely to last long in its present form unless I can pass on some of the work attached to some volunteers. There are the alternatives of producing the mag. at very long intervals or producing an inferior (in format at least) mag. perhaps quarterly. I dislike both ideas. I don't want to throw the mag up, but I see no hope of maintaining the present standard without help. In other words, this is the last issue of GEMINI unless it becomes a cooperative concern. Volunteers wanted!

This issue is notable for many things. I have at last got round to dummyping, and as a result have a mighty respect for those editors who habitually dummy their magazines. The cover is an experiment - I like the principle although the practice can be improved - suggestions welcome. I have now found a stencil which suits my typer, and as a result the reproduction of this issue is way ahead of its predecessors. The FANTASY AND POETRY theme is working out very well, as I think you'll agree on reading the second in the series; the third of which is likely to be written around Poe's unique work. Ann Gardiner has written a poem which is very readable if the metre slips up on occasions. But it remains a pretty fine job. Yet all the same there is a dearth of poets in this country, and so there is a reprint from DIABLERIE in this issue. If any other American can offer anything of this calibre, I'd be very glad to use it.

Ron Holmes has got an interesting slant on fandom in

Ron Holmes has got an interesting slant on fandom in what will be the last article pertaining to the why of such things as fans and fan doings to appear in this magazine.... If anything worth while turns up in a letter it might be used, but briefly I feel that no point is served by such discussions; I don't feel that fandom has any culture as a group, or any purpose. It follows that I - and others - have no wish to 'do' things, to raise fandom from the mire in which, happily enough, it wallows! In any case my own wallowing does not brook interference! If I say much more I shall overlap Ron's article, with which I am in agreement as far as it goes, if it seems only part of the story.

Anyhow, in view of the above GEMINI - assuming that the problem of production ~~will~~ be solved, will be devoted to those interests 'that, phoenix-like' arise from the ashes of fandom. To this end I require material dealing with subjects as music, literature, poetry, and all and more of what Ron mentions.. fantasy of course isn't barred, any more than it is in this issue, although neither is it the principle, or even a major criteria in the choice of material which appears herein.

BOOK REVIEW —

VICTOR Gollancz has recently published a book which rises far above the political considerations which dictate the nature of most of his books, and with ABOVE ALL ELSE he has achieved one of his best works yet. The text from which the title is taken is 'Above all else is humanity'.

The theme is simple; to show that men of all nations are essentially decent, and that no nation possesses a monopoly of the virtues which each nation likes to think its own. A book like this is badly needed to counteract the insanity of Vansittartism and the madness of the racial theories which not only the Nazis subscribe to, if they do so most blatantly.

The book is an anthology of chivalrous and merciful deeds performed by the forces of all nations. We find even a Jap has a sense of humour, indulging in brilliant stunts in a Zero, just outside the range of a group of Forts. We learn a British censor bans publication of an incident in which a German commander sends (concluded at the end of BOOK DESIGN)

FANTASY & POETRY-II

Malcolm Ferguson

RON'S article in the sixth GEMINI breaching the subject of fantasy and poetry reminds me of an earlier interest of my own part in this subject with regrets that my notes are inaccessible.

But Ron seems to have overlooked what are to me one of the most fascinating sources in poetry - the early English and Scotch ballads. Both in themselves and through their influence they have made a major contribution.

It is rare that their authorship is known, for the old ballad is usually a tale evolved by some bard at the hearth - fire, to be altered unceasingly, to be passed down from son to son until eventually statified in ink.

Many of the English-Scotch ballads belong to the heroic type, like KINMONT WILLIE and THE BATTLE OF OTTERBOURNE, but here these must be neglected in favour of the less plentiful ballads whose theme is weird, and often gruesome. Typical of these is THE LYKEWAKE DIRGE, available fairly easily in many poetical collections, with its business of the whinnies picking 'Thy bare banes' if you have not charity in your heart;

'If hosen and shoon thou ne'er gav'st nane,
Every nighte and alle,
The winnies sall prick thee to the bare bane,
And Christe receive thy saule.'

Then there is the grim murder ballad EDWARD, EDWARD, which it is really invidious to quote except in its entirety. But the following fragment will give some impression of it;

'And what will ye leave to your mither dear,
Edward, Edward?
And what will ye leave to your mither dear,
My dear son, now tell me, O?

The curse of hell frae me sall ye bear,
Mither, mither,
The curse of hell frae me sall ye bear,
Sic counsels ye gied to me, O.'

TAMLANE is fantasy - of a man and his lamia lover;

'The Queen of fairies keppit me
In yon green hill to dwell,
And I'm a fairy, litho and limber -
Fair lady, view me well.'

Other fantasy might be THE CORNISH LITANY or LORD RANDAL.
THE DEMON LOVER recalls Coleridge in title and content;

'The masts that were like beaten gold
Bent not on the heaving seas;
The sails that were of taffetie
Filled not in the evening breeze.'

More horrible is THE TWA CORBETS;

'Ye'll sit on his whit hause bane,
And I'll pike out his bonny blue een;
Wi' ae lock o' his gowden hair
We'll theek our nest when it grows bare.'

These again are not difficult to obtain - specifically there is the BLUE POETRY BOOK of the versatile Lang, well illustrated by Henry Ford, while the bibliophile can look out for the magnificent BALLADS WEIRD AND WONDERFUL, a large quarto edition superbly illustrated in soft greys by a master, Vernon Hill.

There are many modern ballads showing the influence of the old, including much of Scott and Burns, while Poe's strange ANNABEL LEE must surely reflect his English ancestry, and childhood tour of Scotland;

'And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.'

And where did Longfellow get his portentous;

'Last night the moon had a silver ring
And tonight no moon we see...'

or Coleridge his impossible;

'The horned moon with one bright star
Within the nether tip...'

(and many lines from KUELA KHAN, THE ANCIENT MARINER, and CHRISTABEL as Livingstone Jones so excellently, though exhaustively, shows in THE ROAD TO XANADU)?

Where but in such ballads as SIR PATRICK SPENS;

'I saw the new moon last yestreen
Wi' the auld moon in her arms.'

Such ballads, like folk tales, form many of the customs and businesses and fictions essential to the writer of this sort of verse fantasy.

Continental ballads, particularly the German ones as DER ERLKONIG or DIE LORELEI have contributed to the picture. Besides those of Goethe, Schiller, and others known by name, there are the ballads in DES KNABEN WUNDERHORN, which have been extensively translated.

A few other examples that come to mind are the INGOLDS-BY legends of Barham, THE GOBLIN MARKET by Christina Rossetti, Morris' THE SAILING OF THE SWORD and TWO RED ROSES ACROSS THE MOON.... To the students of Milton I will leave an open field, for there is still Blake and the miniatures of Emily Dickinson which I like better. There is Sterling and de la Mare (remember THE LISTENERS?), and Chesterton's poetry is often fantasy.. for the fantast culminating surely in the throb of LEPANTO;

'They rush in red and purple from the red clouds of the
morn,
From the temples where the yellow gods shut up their
eyes in scorn,
They rise in green robes roaring from the green hells
of the sea,
Where fallen skies and evil hues and eyeless creatures
be.'

Deft imagery often signalises fantasy in Shakespeare & other Elizabethan playwrights and poets - in Donne, Webster, Marlowe... With the last FAUST first became famous, and it is easy to trace the influence of old tales in Shakespeare.

The range and influence of ballad is tremendous, & from the centuries between Homer and Leacock's ridiculous parody of the ILLAD the keen fantast can sate himself with the poetry of fantasy no matter what his taste.

APPROACH TO LIFE

Ron Holmes

A fundamental teaching of psychology is that summarised in the old adage 'well begun is half done'. It is on this basis psychologists agree child education should be modelled, however much their ideals and methods of realising them may differ.

Let us admit that we have all been repressed and mis-directed in our childhood by adults in a position to influence us, in particular by our parents. No matter how well-meaning they have been they have wronged us in one way or another... which among us can deny that our parents have not given us the love we desired - or the understanding? We have been beaten, hated, spoiled, given feelings of inferiority and sexual taboos; knowledge has been withheld and false ideas thrust upon us as truths. We have been taught to condemn that to which we were really healthily indifferent, and taught to be ashamed at being natural, human, and sincere.

The education of children is an extremely interesting & important topic indeed, & those who have had to do with the subject can show us much. Such a person is A.S. Neil who runs a school for children and youths between four and twenty years. This school is called 'Summervill', and it is run on unconventional lines; children are never forced to attend lessons, doing so only if they wish. They are allowed to curse, and run about naked without anyone to remark on it; for these and similar freedoms are normal healthy things, and can only arouse obscenity where there are unnatural moral taboos.

The children have their own 'government', which deals fairly with pupils and masters alike (for all are here social equals). Each child follows its own trend in life naturally and without interference... one result of this is a high percentage of creative activity; the children have their own theatres where their own plays are produced with their own costumes and settings. They learn the art of expression, not repression.

I don't think I need to go into the advantages of this type of education to fans - it is the sort of thing they appreciate. My main point is that Mr. Neil has discovered this; that when a child comes to 'Summervill' from another

school there is a first stage in which it finds itself free from the hypocritical trends of its former life, and during this period the child will not wash, attend lessons, etc. But after a while, when the inhibition has worked itself out, the child becomes attentive to the example of the other, normal children, emulating them and becoming 'one of the gang'.

In each and every one of us there is this tendency to 'sow our wild oats' to 'live out our inhibitions'. When this cannot be done the inhibitions are uneasily repressed and the result is some kind of self-persecution throughout life. But one takes every opportunity to express one's personality in the first irrational, emotional, stage; as a strained spring seeks to contract and cancel its tension.

Fandom is a 'Summervill' for us all; in it we have our chance to express ourselves, to create, write, print, edit, criticise and generally expand our ego. We take this opportunity too, expressing ourselves first in that emotional manner common to young fans - dogmatic, intolerant, but expressive.

Later this stage is passed, and we settle down, to follow that trend which interests us most. We begin to edit, illustrate, review, and generally be creative. With new-found conceptions and knowledge we turn our energies into constructive channels and with fewer inhibitions to hold us back concentrate upon expressing ourselves in a way which produces real happiness.

I well remember my first writings, the result of a desire to show I existed, a desire to be acknowledged. Later I changed; fandom's importance was still social, but instead of the urge for self-display I wanted to swap ideas and meet people... the emotional element had gone. If I wrote something, I did it to benefit myself, not to be printed.

So we can divide our 'fanning' into three periods, the first of adjustment, then the creative period, and finally a stage where science-fiction comes very little into the picture, and one's ties are very largely social. It is at this stage that, phoenix-like, something arises from the ashes of fandom, in the form of a rooted interest in sociology, mythology, art, psychology, book collecting, etc. In this new stage we really cease to be fans, but still remain our old social contacts - our friends and friendly-enemies. We are a good crowd because we have no emotional connections with each other and can give and accept criticism in a fairly impartial way.

I think, then, that we must accept fanning as a stage in our lives; the release of pent-up energy into channels which make us happy. We are a community of hobbyists; only, unlike most communities of this type our hobby embraces such a wide field that we are less dependent than most upon the outside world.

Our re-education makes us better human beings - and the process of re-education is 'fanning'. It's unconscious, but important purpose is to shake off some of the shackles of conventional upbringing. Once released of this burden we must press on in our own individual way; we cannot take 'fanning' with us for it has outlived its purpose. 'Fanning' cannot be advanced or even set upon certain paths - to call on fans to 'pull together' is folly.

To change 'fanning' from its wild, seemingly sloppy and irrelevant existence would be the equivalent of making the 'Summervill' kids do lessons and wash, and all those things which symbolise opposition to self-expression.

Fandom is a collection of individuals, all expressing themselves and getting rid of various parental legacies. It can be changed a little, but only when the individual gets into the third stage, by direct appeal to his mentality. All reformers of fandom should note that each fan should be dealt with individually - and what a task that would be.

Hence 'fanning' is liberty of expression, one of our basic ideals. Our desire to change it is basically a desire to have other people enjoy themselves in the way we do. This desire is either selfishness or an inability to see the true principles behind it all. So let us no longer ask fans to 'organise', or anything of the sort - let us get on with expressing ourselves while we can lest this desire to chain down other people's mode of expression loses us our own.

Ratings of the previous issue:

All that can be done here is to list the items in the probable order of preference - ratings were very close, and opinions very varied. The whole issue was rated at 7.

Items; Cover, (Gaffron), Nightmare, (Turner), The Zom-bie has no Teeth, (Smith), Fantasy and Poetry, (ed), Alice, (Smith), Soviet Films, (Craig), Dust Motes, Litter, The High Priest. The artwork was easily top; otherwise little diff.RL

DEATH OF A BRAVE

Beside the dead, still Muosiwenski
Stood the ghost of his dead brother,
Long since left the land of living,
Left to join his Mother's Mother.
Muosiwenski was a good man
When he lived among his comrades,
But in death he was a bad man --
Called to help him all the Black Aids,
All the devils of Yaakoping,
All the brats from Helia's brew,
All the spirits of the Dark Land,
All the demons of Waalew.
Cast aside all thoughts of angels,
Cast aside his brother's form --
'I'll be free and King of Devils,
King of Darkness, King of Storm!'
Vainly did his kinsman hold him,
Muosiwenski would not stop
But hurried to the demons Master,
Through the Gates of Valdersrop.
As he passed they shut behind him,
Shut to keep him inside Hell,
And as they shut the demons mocked him,
For they knew the symptoms well.
Muosiwenski went on running,
Did not heed their jeering calls,
Came into a towering palace,
Came to strange and tomb-like halls;
Silent, dark, and very sombre,
Creepy, wet, and very cold;
Muosiwenski went on running,
Very small but very bold.
And through the darkness came a throbbing,
Pulsing on and on and on
Getting ever louder, louder --
The wardance of the Amazon.
The darkness folded round about him,
Seemed to wrap him in its gloom,

Seemed to tangle, tripping, clutching,
Seemed to give his legs no room.
Muosiwenski was a brave man,
Meant to find the king of Hell,
Oust him from His fine position,
Make the Land his citadel;
But suddenly a voice cried 'Hold!!
And followed silence,
Deathly silence!
Something terrible, weird, immense
Was stirring somewhere near at hand,
And Muosiwenski stood and shivered,
Fell - he could no longer stand.
His body slackened, loosely slithered
To the cold and ageless stone;
He wretched and quivered, clutched his neck
In agony, and then lay prone.
Through the darkness broke a light,
A rosy light of scarlet hue
Which faded, darkened, pulsed and wavered,
Only vanished to renew.
Muosiwenski grovelled lower,
Tried to hide his wasted form.
But from the haze issued - Something,
Now a lion, a rat, a worm;
It ever changed its quivering outline,
And at every change there rang
A thrilling note of purest triumph
From the gong of Galdersrang;
Galdersrang, the deadly fiend,
Second only to the King.
He made the sounds come faster, faster,
Set the very air on ring,
Muosiwenski writhed and screamed,
Tried to close his hearing,
Tried to faint but only seemed
To hear each sound the more intensely,
Each vibration, each repeat
Seared his very inmost being,
Till he screamed 'No more! Defeat!'
As his cry for mercy faded,
Silence came and darkness flowed
Broken only by the echoes
in the Devil's Hell Abode.
Muosiwenski's deathly body

Quivered, shook, and then lay still;
But his mind continually whispered,
'Get up, your destiny to fulfill'.
When he saw its implications,
Muosiwenski vowed aloud,
'Never will I vanquish Satan --
I will join the Heavenly crowd;
I will be a saintly angel,
Helping those who lived on earth,
I will join my long dead brother,
Fill his soulful heart with mirth.'
But the King of all the Dark Lands
Chuckled, gloated, called his brats,
Blocked the entrance to the Hell hall
Left him lonely - with the rats.
Free to wander in the darkness,
Free to seek a pathway out,
Free to curse the reigning Devil,
Free to shriek, to pray, to shout.
And all the devils of Yaakoping,
All the brats of Helia's brew,
All the spirits from the Darkland,
All the demons of Waalew,
Creep around him, whispering, squeezing,
Tormenting him in every way,
Telling him of blissful Heaven,
Of the Master-God, Yahwey,
Of vampire bats with dripping molars,
Fleeing from the tolling bell --
And Muosiwenski roams in darkness
For --- THIS is everlasting Hell.

Ann Gardiner

C R E D O

The world is weary, hasting on its road;
Is it worth while to add its cares to thine?
Seek for some grassy place to pour the wine,
And find an idle hour to sing an ode.

Chinese

BC?

"... the King of all the Dark Lands.."



PIERROT

Look for me... look for me
Past wind and sky and stars
On a twilight world
Where an undiscovered sea
Beats ceaselessly, tirelessly
On jeweled sands on hidden shores
To blur the chased outlines of memory.
Remember me... remember me...
As the echo of a twisted thought,
The shadow of a phantom's breath,
Lost in cool obscurity.
Remember me... remember me...
In faint, forgotten melodies.

Remember how a high and alien laughter shone
Through the humdrum tread of eternities.

BOOK DESIGN

Ron Lane

THIS is an article which has been vaguely formulating for some months now. The original idea was a discursion on the art of illustration, but an attempt at this lead inevitably to consideration of the finer points of book production, the intimacy between text and illustration rendering any separate treatment of either unsatisfactory. Despite this my love for the illustrated book will doubtless lead to digression from the wider theme of design and production.

A man who has perhaps done more than any other to develop the art of book design is William Morris. He has been termed the 'father of modern printing', and probably deserves the title as much as any other man. When, six years before his death he founded the Kelmscott Press he also put into practice conceptions which still influence book production. It is difficult to overestimate his work and the stimulus it afforded. Most of the books published were his own, and from start to finish he controlled production, designing his own type - peculiarly suited to his prose, reflecting in the design the same romanticism which he so liked; some of his type was perhaps too ornamental, but the best mirrored his own love of the medieval. Whatever one may think of Morris's work, I know of no better example of complete harmony of typography & material than the works of the Kelmscott Press. These are of course rare now, but one can get some idea of Morris's use of types in the admirable Nonesuch edition of his works.

There are certain points which are essential to book design, certain standards to which any good book must conform. It must be well bound, well reproduced, well arranged on good paper. It must be durable and good to look at. Its parts must harmonise, but the whole book should transcend its parts, should be a unity, the design subordinated to the theme. Due to factors to be touched on later this ideal has been most nearly reached - especially in the case of illustrated books - by de luxe editions.

I must pause here for a discursion on the art of illustration. To me there appear to be some essential criteria of the illustrated book above and beyond the standards to be inferred from the previous paragraph. The illustrators

purpose should be interpretation of the author's theme in his own graphic medium, not merely a few pictures to illuminate some specific passages of the book. This first is often done, and those people who regard illustration as one of the lower arts have either missed the better work or are incapable of appreciation of it. Except in the case of short fragments, as a piece of poetry, I feel that a series of pictures is desirable, forming an integral part of the book, and dependent each on the rest. Beardsley's work is a good example of what I mean - specifically his illustrations to Oscar Wilde's SALOME, with which I am most familiar. Blake's work is somewhere near the ideal - as author-artist he was able to create in two mediums, and I doubt if his work has been surpassed. Illustrating his own writings, he engraved and printed his own plates achieving thereby a harmony that modern techniques - with one possible exception - render impossible, as the artist's work has to be transposed onto a medium which cannot duplicate the original without loss. In any case a combination of powers such as Blake presented is practically unique.

There are a few publishers who have achieved to some extent the perfection Blake reached, notable to me being the Golden Cockerel Press, founded by Robert Gibbings. Here the typography is beyond reproach, and the woodcuts which illustrate the text are one with it. (Incidentally the use of woodcuts and similar media means limited, and therefore expensive, editions; as these media cannot stand up to the wear imposed by modern presses. This state of affairs is unavoidable, for while modern photolithography makes possible facsimile reproduction of originals the artist still has no direct contact with the printing medium. Despite this, lithography has possibilities which are barely touched upon yet; for the artist can work directly onto the stone, when there is no loss of fidelity in reproduction as in other printing processes... At the moment woodcuts and similar processes hold the field, but lithography can free an artist of the limitations imposed even by these.. not that it will replace them; but will greatly complement them. But while recognising the possibilities, I know of no significant work on these lines.)

A fine artist is essential to successful illustration, but he must also be able to enter into the spirit of the work he is to illustrate. David Low for instance would probably be incapable of illustrating Dunsany while Sime would be a poor choice for cartoon work. The artist should be able to

reproduce the atmosphere of the text as successfully as Pape interprets Cabell's subtle mixture of irony and fantasy and wit, as the late Beaman caught the sinister quality of JEKYLL AND HYDE in the 1930 Bodley Head edition, or as AH Fish perfectly concentrates the satire of Leacock's BEHIND THE BEYOND in his illustrations to the same.

In the above I have been preoccupied with expensive books: for reasons given well illustrated & well produced books are dear. Of the examples mentioned, the Leacock is the only one in the five shilling class, and it is the only one poorly designed - the illustrations being reproduced in a manner which is worthy of a far better format. The moral is obvious.

But only a fool or the bibliophilic snob would look down on cheap books. While it is a sad fact that many publishers are concerned with the cheap reproduction of mss. rather than with the production of books, there are notable exceptions. Often the production of poor books is due to poor taste on the side of the publisher or to dishonesty like the use of bulky paper to give the illusion of volume to a book. A good type costs no more than a bad one, a garish binding cloth no more than a tastefully coloured one; a tinted top is cheap, well designed end papers are surely worth while for their sales value apart from any intrinsic merit; much of the fault lies with the publisher, however he may blame the public if taxed.

But matters are far from in a bad way. When one considers the restrictions imposed by a war British publishers have made amazing progress, which augurs well for the future.

The publishers most worthy of comment are surely Penguin. Apart from one failing (which is obviously due to economic considerations - the lack of stout covered bindings) they are first rate. The Modern Painters series especially is amazing value at 2/6d., being extremely well designed, and beautifully printed on fine paper. The quality of the art reproductions is all that could be desired and the critical textual matter completes the best book bargain of today. One feels that a cheap and well bound series would establish Penguins as top publishers of cheap books, if indeed their present achievements haven't already given them the title.

Another cheap series deserving special praise is the new edition of Collins Library. These are extremely well bound in a dull maroon, which is really very wearable, and also looks very well. It might be remarked that this series is obviously intended to stand hard wear - a point which few

publishers consider sufficiently. All the copies I know are illustrated, and quite well too. The end papers by Eric Gill are as nice as any I've seen, and really the only fault I can find is the limitation imposed by a pocket book. This can be an advantage; there is a lot to be said for a book which can be carried around easily, although most pocket libraries are not stout enough to stand the consequent wear and tear without serious deterioration - one of my few gripes about Everyman, this.

The Phaidon Press books can't go unmentioned here - they conform to all the standards I've mentioned, and transcend my feeble adjectival 'well produced'. The most notable point is of course the quality of the reproductions.

I have said enough to indicate the possibilities before us in the way of book production. The principles of design are well understood, and there is much to come from lithographic technique, especially in coloured work. The bibliophile has a happy future indeed, although I don't envy the completist!

CONCLUSION - BOOK REVIEW.

a bottle of whisky to a British medical officer at Arrhem - such stories might undermine the official view of the best -ial Germans. We find Germans and English sharing the same dressing station, and a fully armed Japanese who steps out of the jungle with cocked rifle, but on seeing two stretcher bearers lowers his gun and disappears. Even the Italians are not exempt, and we meet a German U boat commander who gives away his own position to fetch help for the survivors of a ship he has torpedoed.

There are many more similar incidents, which make this a book to be widely publicised in these years of fierce nationalism and consequent hypocrisy. This is a book which can be an immense force for good.

Ron Lane

(ABOVE ALL ELSE, Gollancz 1945, 2/6d.)

GEMINI LITTER

DR SMITH opens with; 'A nice job you made of GEMINI this time in some ways. The most positive attraction is the cover, which is certainly a lallapalooza, and reflects great credit upon BG as an artist and as a hard worker. A most admirable piece of work, both as regards conception and virtuosity of technique. Definitely full marks.

I am neither sufficiently poetic or mystic to delight in the brief poem on the first page, so must pass on hastily to your editorial, part of which makes me purr with pleasure. I do not know whether to be pleased at your future plans, or to suspend judgement until I've read the results. /And now??

Either Arthur Hillman is improving as a poet or I am getting more used to him, for I found THE HIGH PRIEST quite a pleasing little sonnet, as fan sonnets go.

Turner's NIGHTMARE is nice, but not in the maestro's best vein; Harry's turned out some rum hands in his time but none so rum as the left hand of the figure in this drawing.. I like the filler. /Others were as crude/

While I disagree with the initial statement in FANTASY AND POETRY, I'd like this article, in itself little more than a mere catalogue, to be the first of a series dealing with the subject in greater detail.

Incidentally, covering both your remarks in LITTER, & those in your letter, I am in agreement with your view that the social functions of fandom are, for the senior fan, good and sufficient reason for being a fan.

I fought my fight over the merits or otherwise of Wells eight years ago. Books for a desert island? Five double volumes of the BRITANNICA and a complete Shakespeare if you must limit me to six. /Not so dumb this Smith/

ANN GARDNER launches - '..with never a backward look, into a rapturous persusal of that epic of fandom, that accomplishment of a genius - GEMINI. But don't get any wrong ideas - that only goes for the cover really. Bruce has surely surpassed himself. Such simplicity. Such perfection. Such patience. /Such an anticlimax/ I'll give that cover tops without a single reservation. It has style, and immediately raises the standard of G quite a bit. The same incidentally goes for the noble self-control of lettering on the very front. /Modesty forbids.../ ...FANTASY AND POETRY seemed to

toy thoughtfully with the subject, produce a satisfactory array of names, and then call the whole thing off with a rapidity bordering on a dry-up.

DUST NOTES rambles happily on, pursuing no subject further than it wills, but producing quite a nice little collection of bits and pieces. I suppose I should rise up in wrath and anger to smite down the man who says the male sex has anything the females lack, /But -well.../ even if brains happens to be the subject in question. I shall content myself with a dirty chuckle and the murmur that brains aren't everything.

THE ZOMBIE HAS NO TEETH was passable, but I think you should beware of your fiction because it is here the trash is liable to creep in.

The LITTEr was as ever compounded of fractional excerpts bound together by fragments which surely emanate from no other brain than yours. No one else would be capable of it. /'Tis the voice of the lobster/

MILTY ROTHMAN writes from Paris;..The article on Russian movies reminds me of two films I saw in New York recently. (Gad, ain't it something when you sit in Paris and casually mention a movie you saw in New York recently, or in San Fransisco a few months ago!) One of these was a very elaborate animated silhouette affair done to an Arabian Night sort of story. The other was done to the story of Poe's FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER. It was full of montages, slow motion effects, split images, etc. I wish I knew where it was made. /Anyone know of this film?/

MAURICE HANSON; 'I was glad to see Craig's article, but I suppose it might leave your provincial readers cold. Though that is the fault of the Odeon, ABC, and GB circuits for not distributing at least a sprinkling of foreign films among their HAIRY APES, COVER GIRLS, and MADONNAS OF THE SEVEN MOONS. /Here a plug for the Film Societies scattered up and down the country; they exist to show unpublicised films/

BOB GIBSON writes interestingly; 'ALICE is very near the best thing in the issue - for goodness sake don't let it peter out. /Sorry - but G has changed its policy again!/ The DRS comments on the fate of fandom are interesting, especially when related to the Laney article in a recent VOX, which also bears on the Holmologue. /All Laney does is group 'fandom' into fans and THE REST and eulogise the latter fraction/

My guess on the Benson Herbert problem is no bombs

under any of the chairs/The reasoning being as in the previous problem/

The six books to be taken on a desert island would have to be serious ones. Varied, and able to hold a tired man's interest - unless he doesn't have to hunt his own fish and greens! How about an India-paper five volume edition of the Encyclopedia and a tome on the ethno-botany of the region? The one would do a lot towards keeping him alive, and the other would have a short, readable, item to fit into any odd minute.

The OUTLINE OF HISTORY you mention at the beginning of the discussion would be a good choice. Hogben's SCIENCE FOR THE CITIZEN I have yet to read; list it. /It's quite a book - contains an incredible amount of material covering an immense field quite thoroughly - it's a long way from the oft-met popularisations of science/ SCIENCE FOR LIFE might do for another. All of these would stand re-reading, and not require special knowledge to enjoy them, and all have some food for thought.'

HARRY TURNER, still RAFFing it; 'The format of this last issue is much neater, but I agree with the condemnation of your /late/ practice of splitting words unintelligibly to line up the edges. Smith's ALICE suffered by being in the same issue as the ZOMBIE piece; I thot it stank. But the ZOMBIE piece is one of these cameos one expects to meet in, say, LILLIPUT; despite reading it so many times I enjoy meeting up with it in print!

There's the cover. I look at it and think, its a novelty , but does it possess any other qualities? I think not, a hackneyed theme /so is the MADONNA AND CHILD../ and a few bright colours; pretty perhaps, but not inspired. Talking of inspiration reminds me of Read's CONCERT PARTY the lines of which should have been inscribed to some fanmag editor -

'That white hand poised
Above the ivory keys
Will soon descend to
Shatter
The equable surface of my reverie
To what abortion
Will the silence give birth?'

/Unfriendly, I call it/

Here's a paragraph I came across in ART AND INDUSTRY which may throw light on the urge to put out a fanmag;

'There exists in man a certain feeling which has been called horreo vacui, an incapacity to tolerate an empty space.'

This feeling is strongest in certain savage races and in decadent periods of civilisation... it is probably the same instinct which causes certain people to scribble on lavatory walls, others to scribble on their blotting paper. A plain empty surface seems an irresistible attraction to the most controlled of men; it is the delight of all uncontrolled children.' /oh/

As regards the books-for-a-desert-island theme I have only to think what I'd like to bring to this station. The first book would be DH Lawrence's MAN WHO DIED. Not solely because of its literary value, but because it is a book in every sense of the word. It's a special edition by Heinemann with wood-engravings by John Farleigh, the type-face chosen and set up to harmonise with the story and illustrations. It's a sheer pleasure to look at; and a delight to read.

Second I should choose the Phaidon Press DA VINCI with his life and drawings and paintings, and thirdly the same publishers VAN GOGH. Which ye ed has just paid thirty bob for; these Phaidon books must be the best series of art repros in this world - words are just insufficient here? This brings me to a fourth choice - LUST FOR LIFE, a novel of the varied career of VAN GOGH.

For the remaining work of fiction I think Maupassant's collected short stories; they can always be read with enjoyment. Finally I'd plump for a volume of Keats's verse.'

HARRY WARNER; 'GEMINI 5 was a most entertaining publication I will gladly admit. Outstanding was the opening of the chain story. You're familiar, I suppose, with the original fan version of ALICE? /No; I thot the idea was original when I wrote part one -!/? Also liked was the new column. You might be interested to know that Disney is falling deeper and deeper into the rut in which the 'cultured' ensnared Chaplin. He has let himself be convinced that he has a mission to perform, over and above that of entertainment. His shorter stuff is still enjoyable, but his features have lately been resounding flops.

The excerpt SNOW in G SPECIAL went a long way towards persuading me to read MAGIC MOUNTAIN; it was the outstanding reading experience of the year for me. I must invoke your potential wrath and fury by saying that I prefer TRISTAN to DEATH IN VENICE, although I admit both are very great stories. /Good enow!/?

Finally, with thoughts of VE day, PETER CLARK; 'As you say this world has a hell of a future; Allied bombing has put Europe out of the picture for two generations at least... there seems to be some insane plan to obliterate all habitable areas, to out-Nazi the Nazi in every possible way. We will suffer for 'beautiful bombs' and mass murder.'

