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 + you dig what I is saying? That's right, that's what I is saying! +
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J O H N K E N D R I C K B A N G S (1862 - 1922)

One of the more pleasant aspects of researching the late E---- R--- B-----, a project to which I devoted much of my time in the years up to and including 1965, was the opportunity, and in fact the necessity, to delve somewhat deeply into the science fiction and fantasy of the period before World War I. A rather lengthy article in the current LIGHTHOUSE represents preliminary work toward a four- to six-volume treatment of the imaginative literature of that era, which I hope to complete later today.

Many authors produced intriguing imaginative works in this period. Among those I find in the Bibliography of the B----- tome, some of them prominent, others virtually forgotten, are Edwin Lester Arnold, Sir Edwin Arnold (pater), Fenton Ash, John Jacob Astor, L. Frank Baum, Pierre Benoit, Mabel Fuller Blodget, Robert Cromie, Ellsworth Douglas, Arthur Conan Doyle, George Allan England, J. U. Giesy, Percy Greg, H. Rider Haggard, Anthony Hope, Rudyard Kipling, Louis Holberg, Jack London, ol' man Lucian himself, Lloyd Osborne, Edgar Allan Poe, Harry Prentice, R. E. Raspe, J. Allen St. John (yes, the same one Who....), Mary W. Shelley, Frank R. Stockton, Eugene Sue, good Dean Swift, John Cleve Symmes, Jules Verne, H. G. Wells...

...and, not mentioned in that particular book, such authors as Andrew Lang, John Urey Lloyd, John Ames Mitchell, George du Maurier, Harry Collingwood, William Bradshaw, Charles Willing Beale, and R. Norman Grisewood. And of course all the rest of them in the Checklist, and the Supplemental Checklist and so on.

Ranked high among my favorites for an honored position on the roster of Forgotten Masters of Fantasy is the late John Kendrick Bangs. I know of few in fandom who know of Bangs or care for him. The few include Fred Patten, Bill Blackbeard, Don and Maggie Thompson and a local fringe-fan friend named Alan Bruens.

Bangs' works were mostly of a farcical nature, encompassing a substantial amount of fantasy, a far smaller amount of science fiction, some ghost stories, light drama and essays, domestic ("situation") comedy, verse (most of it unbearably saccharine, but some either amusing or touching), and one surprisingly thorough serious volume on the history and economy of Cuba, written shortly after the Spanish-American war.

As a writer Bangs was deeply interested in the works of his contemporaries, and often made reference to other authors and their works in his own writings. Among his favorites (continued on page 7.)

THE MYSTERY OF PINKHAM'S DIAMOND STUD

by Mr. Fulton Streete

"It is the little things that tell in detective work, my dear Watson," said Sherlock Holmes as we sat over our walnuts and coffee one bitter winter night shortly before his unfortunate departure to Switzerland, whence he never returned.

"I suppose that is so," said I, pulling away upon the very excellent stogie which mine host had provided -- one made in Pittsburg in 1885, and purchased by Holmes, whose fine taste in tobacco had induced him to lay a thousand of these down in his cigar-cellar for three years, and then keep them in a refrigerator, overlaid with a cloth soaked in Chateau Yquem wine for ten. The result may be better imagined than described. Suffice it to say that my head did not recover for three days, and the ash had to be cut off the stogie with a knife. "I suppose so, my dear Holmes," I repeated, taking my knife and cutting three inches of the stogie off and casting it aside, furtively, lest he should think I did not appreciate the excellence of the tobacco, "but it is not given to all of us to see the little things. Is it, now?"

"Yes," he said, rising and picking up the rejected portion of the stogie. "We all see everything that goes on, but we don't all know it. We hear everything that goes on, but we are not conscious of the fact. For instance, at this present moment there is somewhere in this world a man being set upon by assassins and yelling lustily for help. Now his yells create a certain atmospheric disturbance. Sound is merely vibration, and, once set going, these vibrations will run on and on and on in ripples into the infinite -- that is, they will never stop, and sooner or later these vibrations must reach our ears. We may not know it when they do, but they will do so none the less. If a man is in the next room, we will hear the yells almost simultaneously -- not quite, but almost -- with their utterance. If the man is in Timbuctoo, the vibrations may not reach us for a little time, according to the speed with which they travel. So with sight. Sight seems limited, but in reality it is not. Vox populi, vox Dei. If vox, why not oculus? It is a simple proposition, then, that the eye of the people being the eye of God, the eye of God being all-seeing, therefore the eye of the people is all-seeing -- Q.E.D."

I gasped, and Holmes, cracking a walnut, gazed into the fire for a moment.

"It all comes down, then," I said, "to the question, who are the people?"

Holmes smiled grimly. "All men," he replied, shortly; "and when I say all men, I mean all creatures who can reason."

"Does that include women?" I asked.

"Certainly," he said. "Indubitably. The fact that women don't reason does not prove that they can't. I can go up in a balloon if I wish to, but I don't. I can read an American newspaper comic supplement, but I don't. So it is with women. Women can reason, and therefore they have a right to be included in the classification whether they do or don't."

"Quite so," was all I could think of to say at the moment. The extraordinary logic of the man staggered me, and I again began to believe that the famous mathematician who said that if Sherlock Holmes attempted to prove that five apples plus three peaches made four pears, he would not venture to dispute his conclusions, was wise. (This was the famous Professor Zoggenhoffer, of the Leipsic School of Moral Philosophy and Stenography. -- Ed.)

"Now you agree, my dear Watson," he said, "that I have proved that we see everything?"

"Well -- " I began.

"Whether we are conscious of it or not?" he added, lighting the gas-log, for the cold was becoming intense.

"From that point of view, I suppose so -- yes," I replied, desperately.

"Well, then, this being granted, consciousness is all that is needed to make us fully informed on any point."

"No," I said, with some positiveness. "The American people are very conscious, but I can't say that generally they are well-informed."

I had an idea this would knock him out, as the Bostonians say, but counted without my host. He merely laughed.

"The American is only self-conscious. Therefore he is well-informed only as to self," he said.

"You've proved your point, Sherlock," I said. "Go on. What else have you proved?"

"That it is the little things that tell," he replied. "Which all men would realize in a moment if they could see the little things -- and when I say 'if they could see,' I of course mean if they could be conscious of them."

"Very true," said I.

"And I have the gift of consciousness," he added.

I thought he had, and I said so. "But," I added, "give me a concrete example." It had been some weeks since I had listened to any of his detective stories, and I was athirst for another.

He rose up and walked over to his pigeon-holes, each labelled with a letter, in alphabetical sequence.

"I have only to refer to any of these to do so," he said. "Choose your letter."

"Really, Holmes," said I, "I don't need to do that. I'll believe all you say. In fact, I'll write it up and sign my name to any statement you choose to make."

"Choose your letter, Watson," he retorted. "You and I are on terms that make flattery impossible. Is it F, J, P, Q, or Z?"

He fixed his eye penetratingly upon me. It seemed for the moment as if I were hypnotized, and as his gaze fairly stabbed me with its intensity, through my mind there ran the suggestion "Choose J, choose J, choose J." To choose J became an obsession. To relieve my mind, I turned my eye from his and looked at the fire. Each flame took on the form of the letter J. I left my chair and walked to the window and looked out. The lamp-posts were twisted into the shape of the letter J. I returned, sat down, gulped down my brandy-and-soda, and looked up at the portraits of Holmes's ancestors on the wall. They were all J's. But I was resolved never to yield, and I gasped out, desperately,

"Z!"

"Thanks," he said, calmly. "Z be it. I thought you would. Reflex hypnotism, my dear Watson, is my forte. If I wish a man to choose Q, B takes hold upon him. If I wish him to choose K, A fills his mind. Have you ever observed how the mind of man repels a suggestion and flees to something else, merely that it may demonstrate its independence of another mind? Now I have been suggesting J to you, and you have chosen Z -- "

"You misunderstood me," I cried, desperately. "I did not say Z, I said P."

"Quite so," said he, with an inward chuckle. "P was the letter I wished you to choose. If you had insisted upon Z, I should really have been embarrassed. See!" he added. He removed the green-ended box that rested in the pigeon-hole marked Z, and, opening it, disclosed an emptiness.

"I've never had a Z case. But P," he observed, quietly, "is another thing altogether."

Here he took out the box marked P from the pigeon-hole, and, opening it, removed the contents -- a single paper which was carefully endorsed, in his own hand-writing, "The Mystery of Pinkham's Diamond Stud."

"You could not have selected a better case, Watson," he said, as he unfolded the paper and scanned it closely. "One would almost think you had some prevision of the fact."

"I am not aware," said I, "that you ever told the story of Pinkham's diamond stud. Who was Pinkham, and what kind of a diamond stud was it -- first-water or Rhine?"

"Pinkham," Holmes rejoined, "was an American millionaire, living during business hours at Allegheny City, Pennsylvania, where he had to wear a brilliant stud to light him on his way through the streets, which are so dark and sooty that an ordinary search-light would not suffice. In his leisure hours, however, he lived at the Hotel Walledup-Hysteria, in New York, where he likewise had to wear the same diamond stud to keep him from being a marked man. Have you ever visited New York, Watson?"

"No," said I.

"Well, when you do, spend a little of your time at the Walledup-Hysteria. It is a hotel with a population larger than that of most cities, with streets running to and from all points of the compass; where men and women eat under conditions that Lucullus knew nothing of; where there is a carpeted boulevard on which walk all sorts and conditions of men; where one pays one's bill to the dulcet strains of a string orchestra that woo him into blissful forgetfulness of its size; and where, by pressing a button in the wall, you may summon a grand opera, or a porter who on request will lend you enough money to enable you and your family to live the balance of your days in comfort. In America men have been known to toil for years to amass a fortune for the one cherished object of spending a week in this Olympian spot, and then to be content to return to their toil and begin life anew, rich only in the memory of its luxuries. It was here that I spent my time when, some years ago, I went to the United States to solve now famous Piano Case. You will remember how sneak thieves stole a grand piano from the residence of one of New York's first families, while the family was dining in the adjoining room. While in the city, and indeed at the very hotel in which I stopped, and which I have described, Pinkham's diamond stud disappeared, and, hearing that I was a guest at the Walledup-Hysteria, the owner appealed to me to recover it for him. I immediately took the case in hand. Drastic questioning of Pinkham showed that beyond all question he had lost the stud in his own apartment. He had gone down to dinner, leaving it on the centre-table, following the usual course of most millionaires, to whom diamonds are of no particular importance. Pinkham wanted this one only because of its associations. Its value, \$80,000, was a mere bagatelle in his eyes.

"Now of course, if he positively left it on the table, it must have been taken by some one who had entered the room. Investigation proved that the maid, a valet, a fellow-millionaire from Chicago, and Pinkham's children had been the only ones to do this. The maid and the valet were above suspicion. Their fees from guests were large enough to place them beyond the reach of temptation. I questioned them closely, and they convinced me at once of their innocence by conducting me through the apartments of other guests wherein tiaras of diamonds and necklaces of pearls -- ropes in very truth -- rubies, turquoise, and emerald ornaments of priceless value, were scattered about in reckless profusion.

"'D' yez t'ink oi'd waste me toime on an eighty-t'ousand-dollar shtood, wid all dhis in soight and moine for the thrubble uv swipin'?' ut?" said the French maid.

"I acquitted her at once, and the valet similarly proved his innocence, only with less of an accent, for he was supposed to be English, and not French, as was the maid, although they both came from Dublin. This narrowed the suspects down to Mr. Jedediah Wattles, of Chicago, and the children. Naturally I turned my attention to Wattles. A six-year-old boy and a four-year-old girl could hardly be suspected of stealing a diamond stud. So drawing on Pinkham for five thousand dollars to pay expenses, I hired a room in a tenement-house in Rivington Street -- a squalid place it was -- disguised myself with an oily, black, burglarious mustache, and dressed like a comic-paper gambler. Then I wrote a note to Wattles, asking him to call, saying that I could tell him something to his advantage. He came, and I greeted him like a pal. 'Wat-

bles,' said I, 'you've been working this game for a long time, and I know all about you. You are an ornament to the profession, but we diamond-thieves have got to combine. Understand?' 'No, I don't,' said he. 'Well, I'll tell you, said I. 'You're a man of good appearance, and I ain't, but I know where the diamonds are. If we work together, there's millions in it. I'll spot the diamonds, and you lift 'em, eh? You can do it,' I added, as he began to get mad. 'The ease with which you got away with old Pinky's stud, that I've been trying to pull for myself for years, shows me that.'

"I was not allowed to go further. Wattles's indignation was great enough to prove that it was not he who had done the deed, and after he had thrashed me out of my disguise, I pulled myself together and said, 'Mr. Wattles, I am convinced that you are innocent.' As soon as he recognized me and realized my object in sending for him, he forgave me, and, I must say, treated me with great consideration.

"But my last clew was gone. The maid, the valet, and Wattles were proved innocent. The children alone remained, but I could not suspect them. Nevertheless, on my way back to the hotel I bought some rock-candy, and, after reporting to Pinkham, I asked casually after the children.

"'They're pretty well,' said Pinkham. 'Billie's complaining a little, and the doctor fears appendicitis, but Polly's all right. I guess Billie's all right too. The seventeen-course dinners they serve in the children's dining-room here aren't calculated to agree with Billie's digestion, I reckon.'

"'I'd like to see 'em,' said I. 'I'm very fond of children.'

"Pinkham immediately called the youngsters in from the nursery. 'Guess what I've got,' I said, opening the package of rock-candy. 'Gee!' cried Billie, as it caught his eye. 'Gimme some!' 'Who gets first piece?' said I. 'Me!' cried both. 'Anybody ever had any before?' I asked. 'He has,' said Polly, pointing to Billie. The boy immediately flushed up. 'Ain't neither!' he retorted. 'Yes you did, too,' said Polly. 'You swallowed that piece pop left on the centre-table the other night!' 'Well, anyhow, it was only a little piece,' said Billie. 'An' it tasted like glass,' he added. Handing the candy to Polly, I picked Billie up and carried him to his father.

"'Mr. Pinkham,' said I, handing the boy over, 'here is your diamond. It has not been stolen; it has merely been swallowed.' 'What?' he cried. And I explained. The stud mystery was explained. Mr. Pinkham's boy had eaten it."

Holmes paused.

"Well, I don't see how that proved your point," said I. "You said that it was the little things that told -- "

"So it was," said Holmes. "If Polly hadn't told -- "

"Enough," I cried; "it's on me, old man. We will go down to Willis's and have some Russian caviare and a bottle of Burgundy."

Holmes put on his hat and we went out together. It is to get the money to pay Willis's bill that I have written this story of "The Mystery of Pinkham's Diamond Stud."

(continued from page 1) were two popular authors who were related by marriage, and whose fictional creations Bangs led to a similar fate. More of this shortly.

To those who collect science-fiction and fantasy magazines, Bangs may be best known for his story "The Water Ghost of Harrowby Hall," which was reprinted in the Avon Fantasy Reader #16, in 1951. In the indices available to me (Day, Strauss, Cockcroft) I can find no other reference to a Bangs story in the fantastic periodicals. The tale at hand is a most amusing ghost story and (truncated to its first three words) is the title story of an excellent collection of Bangs' ghost stories published in 1894.

Of perhaps passing interest is the fact that Bangs' books were illustrated by many of the leading illustrators of the day, including Charles Dana Gibson. His most frequent and favored illustrator was Peter Newell, independently the creator of "The Slant Book," "The Hole Book," and "The Rocket Book," witty novelty picture books at least one of which (the first) is in print again currently. Newell (Bangs' Frederic Dorr Steele, his veritable J. Allen St. John) probably reached his peak in illustrating Bangs' "Mr. Bonaparte of Corsica," an acidic but nonetheless extremely funny burlesque biography. The book is profusely illustrated, and the drawings are as funny as the text -- which is saying quite a lot.

Bangs treated interplanetary themes in at least two books, but in both cases he did so in a humorous fantasy vein rather than as science fiction. In "Olympian Nights" the entire planet Mars is portrayed as a gigantic golf links maintained for the use of the Greek deities. In "Bikey the Skicycle" the rings of Saturn provide a toll-financed bicycle path for interplanetary visitors. Bangs' one science fiction story which I have read appeared in his collection "Over the Plum Pudding" in 1901. However, he was also the author of a musical play which appeared in two different versions, one with the title "Tomorrowland" and the other with the title "The Man from Now." I would be gratified to read either.

The SF story which I have read is titled "A Glance Ahead (Being a Christmas Tale of A.D.3568)." In addition to other virtues, the story is probably the first science fiction Christmas story, a curious sub-genre (remember Asimov's "Christmas on Ganymede" and a number of others?) that could well provide the basis for an anthology one of these years.

Dibs, you vultures!

"A Glance Ahead" predicts a sort of facsimile newspaper (transmitted via stock ticker), "wars" conducted in Madison Square Garden by picked forces before paying customers, a wholly Europeanized Asia, a United States encompassing the entire western hemisphere, deserted British Isles with Calcutta the capital of the new England, a Caribbean cuaseway, a world-wide heating a cooling system using vulcanism for the one purpose and polar air for the other, "aerial bicycles," universal immortality and population balance maintained by universal compulsory birth control, and the availability of multiple android bodies with personality transfer by users!

To return to those in-law authors previously mentioned: they were Arthur Conan Doyle and E. W. Hornung, who became related when Hornung married Doyle's younger sister. According to the standard biography of

Bangs, "John Kendrick Bangs / Humorist of the Nineties" by Francis Hyde Bangs (Knopf, 1941), the admiration of Bangs for Doyle was reciprocated and on visiting America Doyle went out of his way to call on Bangs at his home in Yonkers. (Bangs' unsuccessful run for mayor of Yonkers is thinly fictionalized in his amusing "Three Weeks in Politics." He never lost his interest in politics, was a friend of several Presidents and a frequent White House guest during the administration of (Theodore) Roosevelt. Although he ran for office as a Democrat, he seemed to change allegiance at least once; his last published work was a pamphlet titled "Why I Am for Harding by a Man who Wanted Wood." [General Leonard Wood, American occupation commander in Cuba following the 1898 war, at which time Bangs met Wood and became an admirer of his.]])

Bangs' best known single work, although in my opinion not his best book, is "The House-Boat on the Styx." In this book the ghosts of many distinguished men form a stag club which meets on the rented craft of Charon -- the houseboat of the book's title. At the end of the book the floating clubhouse is invaded by a crew of female ghosts led by Xantippe. The ladies evict the male tenants but are in turn spirited away by the shade of Captain Kidd who, piracy still uppermost in even his incorporeal mind, sails off with the houseboat (the Nancy Nox) for parts unknown.

Some time after the publication of this book Arthur Conan Doyle arranged for the publication of Dr. Watson's tragic tale of the death of the great detective Sherlock Holmes. Sherlockians will recall the publication of "The Final Problem" in the Strand in 1893 and "Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes" the following year.

In 1897 Bangs published "The Pursuit of the House-Boat," dedicated "To A. Conan Doyle, Esq. with the author's sincerest regards and thanks for the untimely demise of his great detective which made these things possible." By his phrase "these things," Bangs referred to no less an event than the entry into the case of the Nancy Nox piracy of none but the shade of Sherlock Holmes. In the course of the book Holmes not only solves the piracy but happily recounts several otherwise unrecorded earthly exploits!

In "The Misadventures of Sherlock Holmes" (Little, Brown and Company, 1944) are reprinted two chapters of "The Pursuit" plus "Mr. Homes Solves a Question of Authorship," both by Bangs, the latter one of eight or more "Posthumous Memoirs" of "Shylock Homes" otherwise unreprinted from their original newspaper appearances. The editor of the volume, Ellery Queen, says:

Mr. Bangs was one of our finest parodists. At best he skillfully blended pure burlesque with cunningly conceived plot details. The Holmes saga proved a veritable bonanza to him and he mined it lustily.

Queen lists a number of Bangs' Holmes parodies, all of which I own except for the unreprinted Posthumous Memoirs and the book "Potted Fiction," which I hope someday to obtain.

The story reprinted on pages 2 through 6 of this Horib constitutes chapter X of Bangs' book "The Dreamers: A Club" (Harper, 1899).

Regarding E. W. Hornung, I am not aware of any personal acquaintanceship on the part of Bangs. However, the latter was obviously an enthusiastic reader of Hornung's works, the best known of which were the Raffles books, followed by the tales of Stingaree, an Australian version of the familiar Wild Western badman.

Raffles, whose name became virtually part of the English language, was "the amateur cracksman," an English gentleman and leading amateur cricketeer who supported himself and his faithful, bumbling "Watson" (known only as Bunny) by a long series of spectacular jewel thefts. In the second Raffles book published Raffles and Bunny enlist in the British forces to fight in the Boer War, and Raffles dies there unequivocally -- in Bunny's arms. However, Hornung published several additional books of the pre-deceased Raffles, one with the intriguing title (I have not yet succeeded in obtaining a copy to read) of "Mr. Justice Raffles."

Pulling a switch on his tactic with Holmes, Bangs followed the death of Raffles with a very funny book titled "Mrs. Raffles." In it, the despondent Bunny emigrates to America where, in response to a classified advertisement, he renews acquaintance with A. J. Raffles' widow. She too has come to America and is preparing to invade Newport summer society, and to follow in her husband's footsteps. With Bunny as butler and confederate (as well as repeatedly rejected lover) she blazes a brilliant career.

Perhaps the most intriguing Bang parody of the Holmes and Raffles stories is "Raffles Holmes & Co." (Harper, 1906). In this book Holmes, recovered at last from his devotion to The Woman, is smitten by a beautiful English maiden. A romance develops simultaneously with Holmes' unravelling of a great jewel theft. At the climax of the case Holmes (in disguise) confronts the thief (also disguised). Each instantly penetrates the other's imposture. The thief is Raffles. And Holmes' new love is his daughter! In exchange for a pledge of reform and the hand of his daughter from Raffles, Holmes lets the cracksman off. A marriage ensues resulting in the issue of a son: Raffles Holmes.

Raffles Holmes inherits the professional talent of his father and of his maternal grandfather equally. By night he becomes the most successful jewel thief of his era. By day: the leading consulting detective of the age. Not surprisingly, many of his commissions involve the recovery -- for a substantial fee and "no questions asked" -- of highly valuable stolen gems.

If there is sufficient interest among Fapans, I will reprint, in future Horibs, additional Bangs-Holmes and possibly Bangs-Hornung material. To allow for response-time in mailings, the next Horib will contain such an excerpt, possibly the opening chapter of "R. Holmes & Co." Further reprints will depend upon response, if any.

To close this section, then, a quotation attributed by Ellery Queen to E. W. Hornung:

"Though he might be more humble,
there's no police like Holmes."

NYCON III NOTES

The sniping from this corner in the past few FAPA mailings, regarding the pre-convention conduct of the Nycon3 committee might lead one to think that I had certain reservations in advance of the convention regarding the prospects of its success. One would be well led. In fact, by the time the convention was a matter of weeks away I had just about reached the position of saying "Well, I don't care how much they botch it, I'll see my friends and eat in good restaurants and savor the City and have a good damned time anyhow."

To my great surprise and gigantic delight, my pre-con fears were almost totally unfounded. The convention was a very, very good convention. Oh, one could pick flaws in it: the programming, although innocuous and generally pleasant, seemed to lack body and impact; the elevator service was indescribably bad (horror stories of people stranded on various floors for lengthy periods, making heroic treks on back staircases, etc., will assuredly abound for years to come); and the banquet, unfortunately and atypically, did end the convention on a regrettable sour note.

Sam Moskowitz, a man whose company I enjoy on a personal and informal basis, is simply a dreadful travesty of an orator. Since he is obviously never going to realize that the only two audience reactions he is capable of evoking are boredom and antagonism, future convention chairmen will have to recognize this fact and keep him away from their rostrums, or face the threat of literal rioting. At the Statler-Hilton things were not far short of violence.

But all of these matters were bad spots on an overall bright picture, and I really misdirect my attention by concentrating on them.

Point is, the program was generally all right. Huckster and art show facilities were excellent. Housedickery seemed not excessive (others may have had different experience than I). The business session was both reasonably orderly and highly constructive (despite the obfuscating hair-splitting parliamentarians) [and more on that apace]. Parties seemed plentiful and pleasant. And, what is least measurable but most important of all, convention's overall atmosphere was one of amiable familiarity, a condition absent from last year's frenetic Tricon and most amazingly regained in this biggest-of-all worldcons.

People? In addition to innumerable old acquaintanceships renewed we met for the first time and immediately took to Joyce and Ray Fisher and to Harry Harrison. Saw but did not get to talk with Mike Moorcock. And less-close friends getting closer: Bob Tucker and Boyd Raeburn and Lee Hoffman and Rusty Hevelin and Mike McInerney and Lee Jacobs and Arnie Katz and Greg Benford (et nu ux) and Sid Coleman. And petit bonheurs like a couple of drinks with Jim Blish being tutored on lightplane design and performance...a chat with Ed Hamilton and Leigh Backett and they remembered us from the Leamington bar...talking with the deCamps about a planned Polish edition of their Canaveral "Spirits, Stars and Spells"... walking down Seventh Avenue with Howard DeVore and Chip Delany talking about book collecting and rock music and psychedelics and science fiction and what they can all mean to each other..."seeing" my novel in the Lancer display in the huckster room and discovering that it was just a cover

proof stuck onto some greenpapered E-Z Rede gothic nurse novel (but soon made dogeared by fans -- flattering, that!)...ragging Andy Main about his preparation to accept the foot of an alien monarch upon his neck...getting the new Crawdaddy personally delivered by Paul Williams...getting invited to a Very Good Closed Room Party and going to it and finding that it was every bit as great as advertised and the closed room was my room...quietly glowing in nostalgic pride as Ray Fisher and Tom Reamy moaned that with all their elaborate production processes neither of them had attained the appearance level of my old mimeographed genzine...sneaking off into a corner at the Lancer Books party with the Lancer Books champagne that only a priveleged few knew about, and pot-shotting L. Ron Hubbard in absentia thirteen stories below in the street with corks, and swigging champagne straight from the bottle (after passing out glassfulls to specially favored friends)...starting to disrobe at Judy's Blish's persuasive request only to have Isaac Asimov demand indignantly that I rerobe....

Bajeez, Grennell, you missed a great one!

About that business session now. I didn't get there for the opening and caught only part of the action, but from what I understand of the outcome, it was distinctly to the good. Regarding the Achievement Awards controversy, the compromise reached seems a reasonable and workable one; if, however, it proves unsatisfactory over the next few years, it can always be amended. Point it, the matter was discussed openly and fairly, brought to a vote, and the Will of Fandom adopted as convention policy. The principle of constitutionality was upheld, which is no mere formality in my regard, but something both precious and fragile. So: on that score, cheers for the committee.

The four-year roation plan also seems a good idea, promising to give the name World Science Fiction Convention solider justification than has hitherto been the case. Once in four years seems seldom enough to see a "world" function take place outside the US (er, North America; sorry!), and any time the non-NA bid is in default, we can just pass it over till next time. Although I doubt that will happen. As for those US fans who can't make the overseas trip, there's always heavier emphasis, for that one year, on regional conclaves, and the prospect, possibly, of a Labor Day Consolacon providing that it is emphasized that this is by nature a consolation prize for those missing the Worldcon and not a schismatic pseudo-worldcon or Rumpcon.

The proposal to study means of preventing last-minute heavy voting for consites by unqualified drop-ins. A possible plan: During "this year's" convention sell memberships to "next year's" convention, en blanc. Cards will read "Member 19XX World SF Convention" without mentioning one city. A sales booth might be manned co-operatively by representative of bidding cities. At voting time, only those who have already joined the new convention may vote on its site. Aside from eliminating casual voters who probably won't attend the following convention anyway, this would get the new concom a fat wad of dollars right at the outset, just when they proverbially need the most and have the least money.

Ah, and at the end, the banquet. I don't mean just the miserable food; somehow, one has come to expect miserable food at banquets (although there is miserable and there is miserable, and this miserable....). I have to lay the blame at the feet of the Toastmaser. Somehow, for all his famous

fire and wit as a platform performer, Harlan Ellison was a poor choice as toastmaster. For one thing, he talked at least three times as long as he ought to have, thereby overshadowing both the Guests of Honor.

But there was a more profound flaw in his performance, as was pointed out in the bar after it was all over. I think it was Noreen Shaw who did the pointing. "These banquets are supposed to be Love Feasts," she said. "But Harlan turned this one into a Festival of Hate." And he did, he did. When Harlan first stood up to open the ceremonies, one was fully prepared to forget the rubber chicken, the limp vegetables and the anonymous dessert and close the convention on a note of love. Yes. Instead, we were given a three-hour (much too long anyway) course in the techniques of theoretical and applied hatred.

Harlan, are you reading this? I imagine so. Remember the moment when you raked over the hotel management for the lousy elevator service? Remember how you had your audience chanting "Kill Kill Kill Kill Kill Kill Kill Kill Kill!"

Funny, Harlan, funny. And the sense of power you must have gotten, too! Ah, but it was an evil thing you were doing. Truly evil. Not just "bad" in the sense of not working (it worked!), nor merely naughty or risqué, nor even cruel for cruelty is an immediate and personal thing. And you didn't even have your audience angry with any particular individual. No, you were working, working hard, working successfully, at the devil's own task of generating HATRED in the world.

Harlan, you did an evil thing.

But listen, Ted White, Dave Van Arnam, Andy Porter, John Boardman, all the rest of you committeeniiks, I apologize for letting myself get sidetracked again into discussing the relatively small flaws in a big and overall magnificent picture. You guys put on a fine, fine convention, one that I expect will go down in fannish history with a reputation of one of the very finest ever. And that reputation will be a deserved one.

Norm and Gina Clarke, you missed a great one.

Bill and Barbara Blackbeard, you missed a great one.

Jean Grennell, you missed a great one.

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Q U O T A T I O N:

Fewer and better troops and simpler administration.
Talks, speeches, articles and resolutions should
all be concise and to the point. Meetings also
should not go on too long.

Mao Tse-tung,
"Methods of Work
of Party Committees"
March 13, 1949.
Selected Works, Vol. IV, p.377.

MAILING COMMENTS ON THE 120th MAILING :

FANTASY AMATEUR 120 (Officialdom) The election of officers this year seems to be a mere formality, and the distribution and return of ballots a dead letter. For anyone who's interested, though, on the basis of write-in votes, Len Moffatt ought to be our new president. If writer-ins are not accepted, though....

There was all that fuss, publishing of special editions, etc., when the Association passed the quarter-century mark back in 1952 [Eney's "A Sense of FAPA" was of course the outstanding memorial volume, with Evans' "Remembrance" an honorable second]. Nobody seems to have noticed, much less raised a rumpus over, the thirtieth anniversary, just past. Well.

THE DEVIL's WORK vln7 (Metcalf) I can't go along with your condemnation of the portion-and-outline system of marketing and writing books. Unless an author is planning to retire after completing the current book, he still has an incentive to do a good job: he will want to sell his next book. And if he gets known as a guy who starts well and falls apart, he won't sell many more books on portions. Aside from this, there is such a thing as pride of craftsmanship (not even to mention "art.") Furthermore, books can be returned for rewrite or even rejected outright if the complete version isn't up to the portion.

You see, writing a whole damn novel is a big investment of creativity, talent (assuming you got enny), plain labor. It seems to me too much to demand that an author make this big an investment in a product that he may not be able to sell...either because it isn't good or because there's no market for that kind of stuff. Lissen, I have about 4,500 words written of a new novel and I can tell you that it's about nine million per cent better than anything I've ever written before, emphatically including "One Million Centuries." (I haven't been working on it the past few weeks because I've been semi-invalided with an attack of what my medic calls allergic asthmatic bronchitis, but I'm mostly recovered now and about to resume work on the thing.)

But it happens to have a couple of things that may make it hard to sell. One, it's in an experimental style that isn't even exactly English. Two, it's dirty. I don't mean titillating (or is that titillating?) -- anybody who could get his kicks from this stuff would be a real weird-o. But it's about a vulgar, degenerate society so it's pretty rough stuff. Now, I'll willingly invest 10- to 15,000 words (plus an outline) in this thing, as "risk capital", and if some publisher then gives me the Go signal I'll write the rest of the book. But I don't feel very much like investing 60,000 words' worth of effort (it's hard work, dammit, when I could be reading or at the movies or playing with my children or making love to my wife or getting drunk or visiting friends or having friends visit me or doing all manner of pleasant things instead of sweating over a hot typewriter!) purely on spec!

If I can't sell the thing, I can bang out a sword-and-sorcery about Jakk Brann Gw'un, the mighty-thewed, the Slayer of the Tousand Vampires, ritual Guardian Against the Flames, Sole Titled Sitter upon the Twin-Shafted Throne. Also, portion-and-outline, get a contract and go to work; no tickee no washee as they used to say before enthic jokes ceased to be acceptable in polite company.

HORIZONS 111 (Warner) Your puzzle about the potential exhaustion of all reprintable material in Public Domain is intriguing, but (un?)fortunately need not come about. For one thing, "new" material enters the PD annually, probably at a sufficient rate to meet Ace Books' requirements. If, however, the supply falls short of the need, there is always the possibility of re-reprinting one's own (and others'!) earlier rprints, as we see a number of publishers doing already.

SERCON'S BANE 33 (Buz) Well, we could discuss this "democracy" bit for a long time to come, but Nature seems to Worked Her Course and things look okay from here, so mebbe let's drop the thing. Or table it, pending how things work out in the next year or few.

Professor Thintwhistle has not been dropped. I haven't got around to bugging Pascal Pascudniak for another installment of script for good ol' Fenton Farnsworth to draw up, and it looks mighty as if the feature won't make this Horib, but we'll try to get it running again in #9.

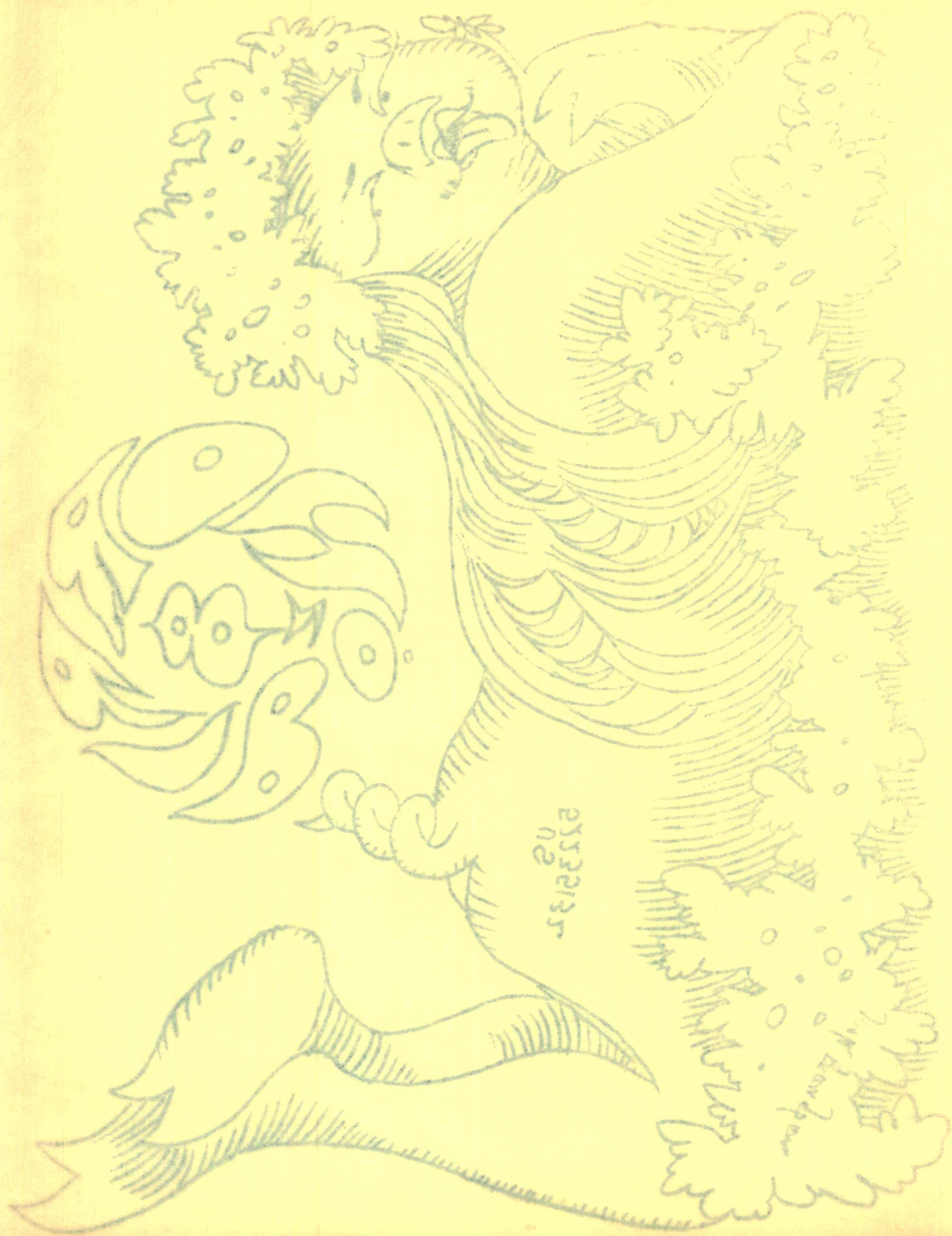
CELEPHAIS (Evans) Well, I may get back to that autobiog some time, but not right away. Flippancies aside, I had a pretty unpleasant time for a dozen years or so after 1940, and writing that first installment showed me that I can and do relive those old years pretty poignantly, and frankly I'm not eager to relive the next few. §§§ Sure I meant the multipun about Kitty. §§§ The Bangs question answered in full a few pages back, right? §§§ As mentioned to Buz, I'm sorry the Prof isn't here this time, but I'll do my best to get him back.

PANTOPON 18 (Berman) But...but...what is the "dull but useable" alternate title for Plague Planet, and what ever became of the story that went with it?

ESDACYOS 14 (Cox) Jack and Phoebe Gaughan were here the other night and for about six hours we talked about putting out another one-shot, but got no farther than the cover portrait of Petunia Pig on this Horib. Perhaps another time. §§§ Last month Kitty had a litter of six kittens. Amazing for the tiny thing she is! One grey-striped and white, two black-and-whites (one of them named Batcat), two orange-and-whites (both named Green Lantern). Can you guess who names kittens around here? The sixth is white except for a grey-striped "skull-cap" and a particolored tail. And, on her body, orange and black would-you-believe polka dots?! Jack's comment: "Looks as if my son Brian found this all-white kitten and said to himself 'I think I will just mess her up but good! Now where are my Dad's paints?'"

LIGHTHOUSE 15 (Carr) KL: What are you doing? TC: Putting out a fanzine. KL: Why? TC: (Looking aghast at the three-year-old girl does not reply.) §§§ KL: Why do you all run around like that every six minutes? TC, AP, RL: (Looking aghast at the six-year-old boy does not reply.) Well, it was a whole lot of fun. Next time, all on the right stencils, and God willing no machine breakdowns, and Lester'll think it stinks.

What can I say about the best single issue of any fan magazine I've seen in months and months? Shall I praise Terry? Shall I praise Carol? Chip? Fritz? Gahan Wilson!!! Even Harlan? Even Harlan? Shall I say that Stiles was excellent, that Gaughan was brilliant? (He was.) Shall I cop out by saying that this is the end of the issue? I shall.



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