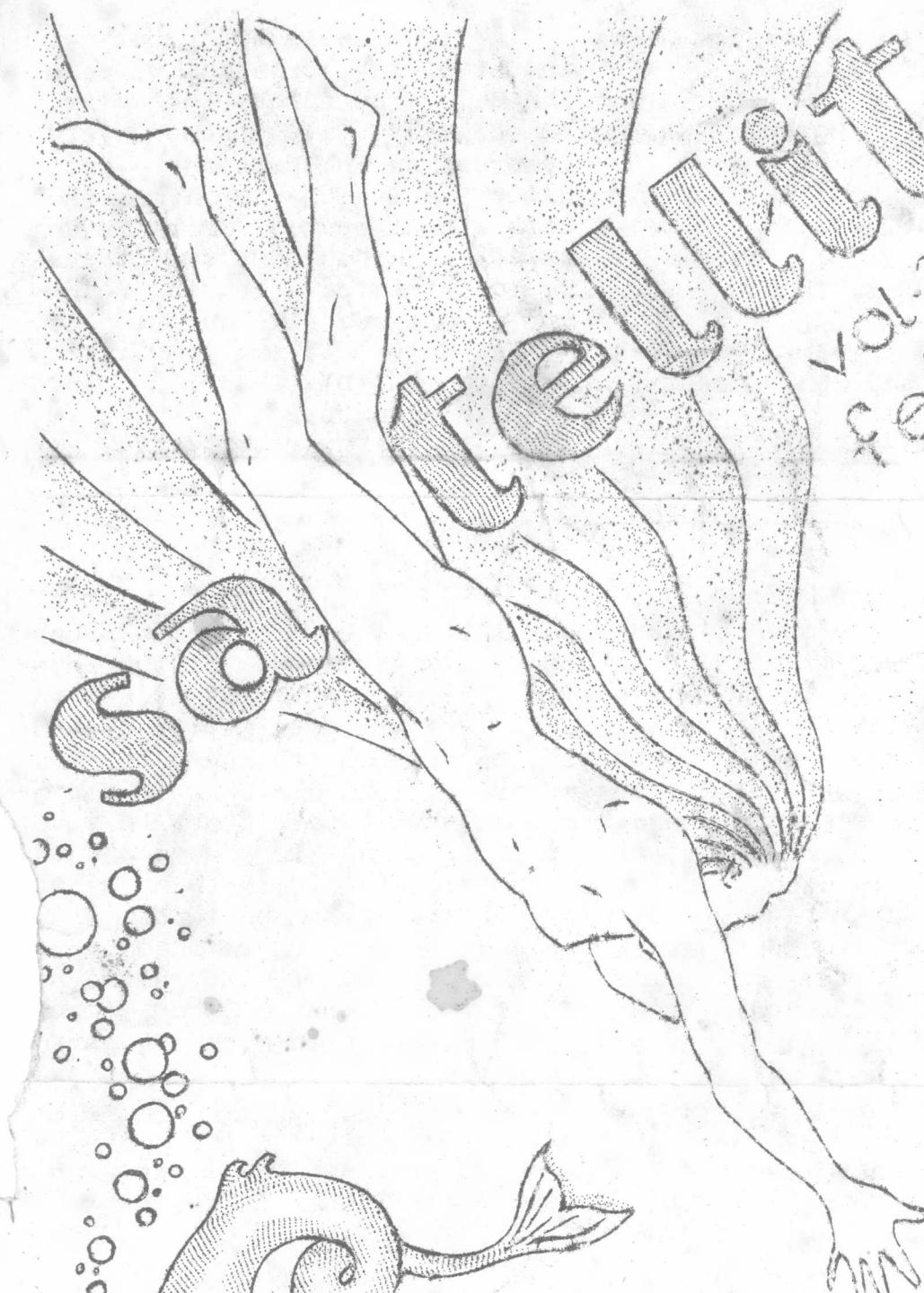


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COVER BY HARRY E. TURNER

Next issue of "Sally" will appear round about the 8th. March.

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MOONSHINE

READERS' OPINIONS

FROM A.G. DUNN: When the discussion about gems has finished, what about "My ideal STF magazine"? That would give some of the fans something to exercise their imagination /if any/ on. My ideas on the subject are:- It should be large size, smooth paper, with a distinctive title like the old "Cometaile", covers not too gaudy, trimmed edges, and durable paper for the cover. A contents page in plain type, well spaced, with just enough comment about each story to give an idea as to its nature (i.e., time travel, etc.) Story headings to be, if possible, like those in the old Wonder Stories, with at least one full page illustration per story. Illustrators should be Paul (for his machinery), Wesso (for the ruggedness of his drawings) /We should say raggedness/, Morey (for the admirable restraint which he shows), Dold (for his superb, slightly grotesque finish), and Marchioni. /What about Virgil?/ Stories should be of the more thoughtful kind, with perhaps an odd "thud-and-blunder" thrown in now and again to satisfy the more juvenile readers. /Like me and Harry Kay?/ Departments should include, if possible, an article per issue, and a questions and answers column, as well as the usual readers' letters. The modern American slick style of writing, which apparently originated in the detective and western pulps, should be strongly discouraged.

FROM ROLAND FORSTER: The little girl is getting mighty slim nowadays and I hope you can get enough subscriptions in to relieve her of the slimming diet. /They're coming in quite nicely - we hope to keep up to 10 pages, maybe more, from now on/. Contents of the latest issue, though rather meagre, are as usual quite entertaining, particularly Smith's little bit of sarcasm and Harry Kay's article - though the latter not for reasons that might appeal to the author. Fantacritic's (Bert Lewis?) /Aha!/ reviews of recent books is a good idea too.



As I regard the pile of 1939 magazines I have accumulated to date I feel truly thankful that I have bought most of them as remainders, for otherwise the money I had thrown away would cause my parsimonious soul much misery. The only cause for regret through this is that my collection is not complete enough for me to make a complete survey of the year, and this must be kept in mind when reading my remarks, together with the fact that I am writing this at a date when the last two months of Astounding have not appeared, and that I am not going to refer at all to weird fiction, not even to Unknown.

In choosing the best stories of the year one is helped considerably by knowing that Amazing, Fantastic Adventures, Science Fiction, and, after a thought to "Ananias", Dynamic, can be eliminated at once. In the longest stories we must include the serials in Astounding against the novel-length stories in the other magazines. It is difficult to pick out the best, for there is not one that is more than entertainment of a very easy-going nature, but I will hand the laurels to Taine for his story "Tomorrow". This has the weakness, I think, that the scientific motif is not emphasised sufficiently to make the rather spasmodic action scenes coherent, the writing seems rather vague. But at that it is better than "The Black Flame", which while entertaining more than its rivals, seems to lack strength.

Similarly, there is nothing outstanding in the short story and novelette types, though, thanks largely to Astounding, the general level is much higher. Stuart's "Cloak of Aesir" pushes its way inevitably to the fore in the novelette group, but the best short story may be one of a dozen, so we will be patriotic in two ways and give the palm to Russell's "Vampire from the Void", with the reservation that the trophy might go with equal justice to any of a dozen other stories in Astounding, and elsewhere.

The best cover is undoubtedly the April Astounding, the best interior that at the beginning of "Pleasure Trove" in the August issue of the same magazine. The worst cover is undoubtedly that of the March Science Fiction, although in this field Amazing offers very strong opposition. Almost any illustration in Amazing will do for the worst interior of the year.

As for the worst stories, the choice is so vast that it cannot be made. One wonders whether anything worse than the Josh McNab stories could be written, then remembers "Wanted, Fearless Engineers" and at once places that at the nadir. Even the latter, though, cannot sink lower than many of its companions in the same magazine, and in Science Fiction and Fantastic Adventures.

A revue of the year as a whole cannot help but bring on a feeling of despondency. On the credit side of affairs we have the determination of Astounding to cater for an intelligent class of reader, we have Fantasy, and in a lesser degree, Tales of Wonder, attempting to present science-fiction of a quality reasonably comparable with other magazine fiction, and we have to admit that Thrilling Wonder, Marvel and Startling have produced more or less readable stories in a sufficiency to indicate a tendency towards

better things. In the latter cases though it is to be noticed that all the better stories were written by authors whose names have a certain selling power, and there may be a suspicion that the stories were published because of that power of the author's name than from any desire to present stories of definite merit.

On the debit side we have Amazing, Fantastic Adventures, and Science Fiction, contemplation of which is most depressing. We may not place Dynamic entirely in the same class, but it is little above it, and in spite of the "Black Flame", Startling is little better. It is impossible to predict just how far scientific fiction is damaged as a whole by these degenerates, one's only hope is that the mentality for which they cater is of such a low grade that its possessors will not be able to earn the money with which to support the wretched things.

THE FAN IN HIS SUPERNATURAL HAUNT

by ERIC C. HOPKINS

Most of you will be familiar with that remarkable series, "The British Fan in his Natural Haunt", perpetrated by Bill Temple, in which he slandered every London fan with a past, but failed to produce anything on himself as he just happened one particularly sinister Hallowe'en.

Well, I've always regarded that series' title a misnomer because there was certainly nothing in it connected with hauntings; after all, even Arthur Clarke and his Ego are only human, and I thought something should be done to show this man Temple his business. I accordingly produced this, a shocking tale of rural London, which is based upon the central true account of an encounter with Something by a denizen of the metropolis, who shall remain anonymous if only because I have embellished his simple story with various inventions of my perverted mind which may cause you to doubt his veracity. Remember, then, the haunting lies in the recent past, an undeniable fact. You have read of London fans in their natural haunts; now read of he who was supernaturally haunted!

Now being a Londoner I would not know Hampstead Heath if I stood in the middle of it, but this fan of whom I speak has good reason to remember it always. He, who is a member of a spirit-laying society, got wind of a ghost that was said to haunt a sort of clearing off a lonely track on the Heath, so with the unflinching bravery of the scientific investigator he decided to visit this benighted spot. He arrived, of course, after night had fallen (leaving him with a mental depression) and found the prospect forbidding for even a ghost-hunter. The path was lined with an impenetrable scrub of density undiminished except where it was broken by an avenue of trees, about a hundred yards long, which was thickly roofed by the interlacing branches of the trees. This avenue led off the path at right angles to nowhere in particular, and was probably the remains of an old track; but here it was that, according to several individ-

ual observers, there dwelt a malignant spirit in the shape of a devilish-looking creature, and whosoever ventured beneath the branches was visited upon for his sin by this uncouth Thing.

Well anyway, the experienced but still susceptible spirit-layer plucked up his courage and walked steadily through the avenue, coming in a relieved fashion to the other end. He gave a look round, could see nowt, and strolled back again. Well, thought he, as he stood safely upon the path, His Unholiness has apparently taken leave of his haunt, and so convincing himself, he tempered his discretion with valour and turned again.....

Once again nowt arose from this dauntless deed, but three journeys through the avenue had taken their toll of his nerves. He was perfectly convinced that if anything was to happen at all, it would be upon this, his last trip back to the path. It always did in the books. He was determined to contact that path by any route but the one before him, but alas, he sought in vain. The wood lay thickly about him, and the only way to reach the path was between the trees! Then, to make matters worse, the moon disappeared behind some dark cloud and the aisle before him seemed to solidify into a solid extended arch of evil blackness. But the journey had to be taken and he was British (By gad, sir, aren't we all?) and so, plucking up his courage and his loosely-fitting socks he commenced to march back to the path.

Scarce twenty of the hundred yards had been covered ere his Devilishness, angered by mere mortal trespassing, sprang into activity. A fearful caterwauling issued from the darkness behind, our spiritual correspondent, who said "Curse the apparition", or words to that effect, and took hurried steps to leave it in the rear, but to his dismay found the row keeping close up behind him, accompanied by crashing footsteps and hard breathing. He took the rest of the distance in real Jesse Owens' style and emerged into fresh air just as a hot blast swept the seat of his trousers, and, scooting down the path, he looked back and saw outlined in the dark archway of the avenue a great figure of horror with reddish eyes gleaming evilly, capering and beckoning in satanic rage, and uttering noises in keeping with its unholy appearance.

When the laid spirit-layer finally pulled up at the first house of alcoholic refreshment on the path, he staggered into the public bar and ordered three double whiskies. While imbibing these he became aware that the locals were regarding him with some curiosity, but ignored this with the noble disaffection that on affects in rural places. Finally, however, one of the regulars came over to him, nudged him familiarly, and said "Oi, cully, look at yer trowsis", whereupon the unfortunate desperado, screwing round at his seat, found that where the heat had been felt at the close of his adventure the cloth was scorched to a fine rich brown. (Pause for gasps of awe and bobbing of Adam's apples). He reluctantly gave a very full account of the night's doings, was feted all round, and woke up in the morning with a splitting headache and a ruined pair of trousers.

Concludeth the saga.

THE LIFE STORY, TOGETHER WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF THE REPUTED DEATH, OF
THE ANTI-GRAVITATIONAL SCREEN

BY RICHARD G. MEDHURST

There is a surprising and rather painful lack both of insight and gratitude in the careless way in which the average science-fiction fan regards the familiar things that are at the base of our civilisation, ray-guns and time machines and telepathic communication, and all the rest. The cause is probably to be found in that lack of imagination that is so characteristic of this type of fanatic. Here are things that he uses every day, and it never crosses his mind that they might not have been with us: he has no thought or word of thanks for the devoted pioneers who, undeterred by failure, strove nobly, among apathetic or hostile critics, to add each his little bit to the structure of theory and fact that was one day to culminate in such a triumph of human ingenuity as the invaluable anti-gravitational screen. One might say that these fanatics have no more realisation of the wonder of the anti-gravitational screen and no more reverence for the men who made it possible, than more normal people have for the electric light. More, even normal people would rise against the slanderer who set out to prove that the electric light is impossible, whereas the s.f. fan simply passes by with a bored smile the Willy Leys who thus malign this nobler invention. I hope I will be stirring the imagination of the stfical world (if at such a late date this is still possible) to a better realisation of the struggles of an earlier, less lethargic generation, if I outline, however inadequately, the story of the growth of the now indispensable screen.

A foreboding of anti-gravitation is to be found, put very clearly and unambiguously, as early as 1638, in Bishop Francis Godwin's account of that trail-blazing voyage of Domingo Gonsales, published as "The Man in the Moon, or a Discourse of a Voyage Thither". We are told how, among the gifts bestowed on Domingo by the Emperor of the Lunar world, is a jewel which, "being clapt to the bare skin of a man, in any part of his bodie, it taketh away from it all weight or ponderousnesse". Perhaps the first recorded use of the force of anti-gravitation occurs when Domingo uses this jewel to ensure a safe landing in China, when the wild geese that supported him were beginning to fail.

But this discovery of Domingo seems to have been overlooked by subsequent workers. Later research was given an entirely unexpected turn by a phenomenon hit upon, apparently quite accidentally, by that 17th. Century Edison, Cyrano de Bergerac. According to the account in his "Voyage dans la Lune" (published posthumously in 1657), the discovery followed close on his equally accidental invention of the rocket space-ship. We are told how Cyrano set out, rather precipitately, in his "machine" propelled by rockets, and how, after rising to a prodigious height, the rockets were exhausted (a common drawback to this type of vessel). Then, "I felt, without the least stirring, my elevation continuing, and adieu Machine, for I saw it fall down again towards the Earth. That extraordinary

Adventure puffed up my Heart with so uncommon a Gladness that, ravished to see my self delivered from certain danger, I had the impudence to philosophize upon it. Whilst then with Eyes and Thought I cast about, to find what might be the cause of it, I perceived my flesh blown up and still greasy with the Marrow, that I had doubled myself over with, for the Bruises of my fall". (in a previous attempt)

"I knew that the Moon being then in the Wain, and that it being usual for her in that Quarter to suck up the Marrow of Animals, she drank up that wherewith I was anointed, with so much the more force, that her Globe was nearer to me, and that no interpolation of Clouds weakened her Attraction". (I quote from the first English translation, the very badly expurgated "Comical History of the States and Empires of the World of the Moon, newly Englished by A. Lovell, A.M." - 1637).

It only remains to say that Cyrano made a safe if undignified landing in an apple tree, in the Garden of Eden, which turns out, contrary to usual belief, to be a Lunar domain.

In 1827 appeared in New York "A Voyage to the Moon..." by a gentleman who called himself Joseph Atterley. This is the book that was so petulantly abused by Edgar Allan Poe in his bad-tempered footnote to his own moon-flight, "Hans Pfaal". "Joseph Atterley's" anti-gravitational substance approached rather nearer to our own modern product, by being a metal. It appears that Joseph fell in with a Brahmin who explained to him how "there is a principle of repulsion as well as gravitation in the earth. It is exhibited in electricity." After much labour and research, this principle has been found embodied in a metallic substance. This metal, when separated and purified, has as great a tendency to fly off from the earth as a piece of gold or lead has to approach it". At the same time, the influence of Cyrano's marrow-fat is still felt, for in the course of the experiments of the discoverers of this metal, they find that "this same metal, which was repelled from the Earth, was in the same degree attracted towards the moon". What could be more convenient! All that remains is for Joseph and his Brahmin to construct the space-ship and be off. And very like our modern space-ship it is, constructed in the form of a cube with a window in each face, and a supply of "condensed" air. The velocity is regulated by throwing off balls of either lead or the metal "lunarium". It is somewhat surprising to find that when they near the moon, and release balls of "lunarium" and lead, the former fall towards our satellite and the latter towards the Earth.

In 1864, the year before Jules Verne fired off his gigantic cannon against the moon and his countryman, Achille Eyraud, revived the rocket for a trip to Venus, London saw published another anonymous "History of a Voyage to the Moon". The only copy of this rare book I have seen outside a museum, by the way, is in the choice collection at B.I.S. Headquarters, Gray's Inn Road, at which all collectors should have at least one look before they die. The author of this work has taken a step further than Joseph Atterley, in discovering a substance ("repellant", obtained by moistening a mixture of two earths) which is repelled by both Earth and Moon - by far the more convenient arrangement. By a further stroke of luck, sheet iron is found to be a shield against the repelling force. But in his excite-

ment it is to be feared that the author goes rather too far. The powers of anti-gravitation are great, but to take along a whole forest in one's ship seems rather too much of a strain! And that is what these voyagers do, of all reasons, to purify the air from exhaled carbon dioxide! Presumably, they had never heard of caustic potash. The ship (air-tight!) eventually measured 100 ft. square by 50 high, and the intrepid pioneers camped out in a wooden hut under the shade of their portable jungle.

By 1887, after thirty-three years of research, the anti-gravity shield had become both sure and portable, the last two words on any such invention. In that year appeared a work with the unpromising title "Mr. Stranger's Sealed Packet", by Hugh MacColl (London, Chatto and Windus). The credit for the initial theoretical and experimental work appears to be due to Gilbert Stranger, father of the Joseph Stranger who actually carried out the flight into space. His main discoveries are set out this:

1. "Theoretically, the attracting force residing in every particle of matter, and drawing it towards other particles, is capable of conversion into a repelling force".

2. "Practically there are very few substances in nature whose attracting tendency can thus be converted into a repelling tendency; but there is a certain remarkable metallic compound harder than steel or even diamond, and, unlike other metallic compounds, perfectly transparent, which possesses this capacity of conversion to an enormous extent".

3. "The main agent of this conversion is electricity".

Gilbert Stranger then goes into the method for regulating the amount of this repelling tendency. The ultimate space-ship is described as being twenty feet long, cigar-shaped, with the outer shell built entirely of this extremely hard and highly magnetic compound. The trip to Mars, we are told, was performed in rather more than ten days, with an uneventfulness that was a tribute to Gilbert Stranger's calculations.

There is now little more to say. Space will not allow us to dwell on such technical variations as apergy, discovered independently, no doubt, by Percy Greg in England ("Across the Zodiad", 1880), and John Jacob Astor ("Journey in Other Worlds", 1894) in America. And of more recent developments, we can only say that, after being widely publicised by H.G. Wells, as "eavorite" ("First Men in the Moon, 1901) and by Edward E. Smith as "X" ("Skylark of Space", 1908), the anti-gravitational metal has culminated in being proved impossible by Mr. Willy Ley in "Fantasy", 1939.

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IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:

THE long-awaited masterpiece,

"At the Mountains of Murkiness", by Arthur C. Clarke.

"The Return of Sam Inscrutable", by Sam Moskowitz.

"Forgotten Shadow" by C. S. Youd.

AND A MILLION THANKS TO HARRY WARNER FOR RELINQUISHING ALL CLAIM TO C. S. YOUD'S "GOLDEN ROAD", WHICH WE WILL USE IN A FEW MONTHS.

MOONSHINE (continued from Page 2)

FROM ERIC C. WILLIAMS /who, by the time you read this, will have been in Liverpool for a weekend at our den of iniquity - more comments next month, if we still survive/: I missed the cover, especially after the promise of that last cover by some anonymity /his name was in reasonably large type on the contents page, Cuthbert/. If you're getting hard up for ideas I guess I'll have to save the day as I have saved so many other days /rainy ones?/. A Space ship (yeah!) diving down with rear tubes flaming out in fearful destruction, and below an alien landscape dotted with alien creetchures - good, huh? /Sure - if you care to pose as an example of the alien creetchures/ Here's another - in the foreground an alien landscape with weird things looking up into the air...../there's more of this, but it's horribly unnecessary, so we'll leave off/. It was a damn good idea putting Kay's article "On Criticism" along with Smith's serio-sarcastic "How to Enjoy SF" /of course it was - look who thought of it!/. Kay always annoys me. He's always so blasted dogmatic and superior even on the most trivial things - such as Fearn. His dragging in of his glorification of Fearn and his depredation of your antagonism only shows the real cause of his writing the article and the coarseness of his literary taste. /Look out - the tanks are coming!/ The reason why people attack Fearn is because they identify him with the hack style and wildness that has come into SF, apparently for good. We who love SF (whoo!) regret this: we deplore all the Kummers and Kuttters and their commercial minded kin. Editors, truck drivers, little boys and Kay be damned: we the intelligentsia /...!/ know as certainly as we know anything else that Fearn is a bad influence....I know definitely now that Fantacynic is not Sam Youd, because Sam is too involved in reading Chesterton and Swinburne to read the books reviewed. /For the benefit of those numerous fans who are like Cuthbert, and have spent so much time looking at the covers of magazines that they never learnt to read, we would point out that this book review was conducted by FANTACRITIC - no relation at all, yah!/.

FROM D.R. SMITH: Kay's article disappointed me. The first part of it passes as reasonable common-sense, though it seems to me that if every writer to the correspondence columns of the magazines gave his reasons for liking or disliking each story in detail there would not be many letters published for reason of space. Kay makes no attempt to put his precepts into practice. His sole reply to the critics of Fearn who say he's poor is to say, without producing any reasons for saying so, that he's not. He cites some "good" stories by Fearn, but who says they are good? Mr. Kay. And does the gentleman give any reason for this statement? He does not, and it seems to me that he is a very poor champion for JRF, and a very poor follower of his own precepts. I do not recall seeing any criticism, constructive criticism that is, by Mr. Kay anywhere, anyway. Nor, for that matter, by anyone else.

FROM H. J. ELLIS: I'm not much of a judge of poetry, but I thought "Stardust" very good. The scintillating, dazzling wit of Mr. Smith left me with a feeling of breathless awe at the daring of this master mind. /More Stardust, evidently - or is it Moonshine?/ May I respectfully and tenderly ask for more /Don't be greedy/. The above are the best two items to my mind. There is no need to go into details about the others as they all maintained a high level of interest.

FROM D. WEBSTER: I can't wax enthusiastic over Harry Kay's article. Kay unfortunately ignores his own doctrine in the mention of Fearn's stories. And then again, I do not like his invention of Youd-Nanis. Definitely bad taste:::::The Smithology: somehow this doesn't just seem to suit his style, or rather, while he has got the most out of his treatment, this ironical business is a little on the flimsy side. As a matter of fact, I enjoyed it hugely, a great deal more so than I did the rest of the issue; it was probably just a little different from what DR usually turns out. Or maybe I have come to expect too much from Smith. I expect you appreciate this touch of genius in Smith. /Well, we - er, that is, we, as it were, ah - /. I was, to say the least of it, intrigued by his use of "Mysogynism". A very interesting word. Feeling that this was not precisely the nuance of spelling, and thus perhaps of meaning, to which I had been accustomed, I looked it up in a stodgy dictionary, and the nearest approach I could find was "misogyny". Well...! I am very pleased to see that DRS has now decided to reject his once-frequent affectation of "Scientific fiction" in favour of the more common "science fiction". But another indication of deity, you might say - ah, no, only in the same sense that his use of "mysogynism" is an indication of the fact that the English or American language cannot adequately express a science-fictionists thoughts (Smith's own theory). /If you study the Smith article in this issue you will find that he has returned to this original presentation/ About the Bard's letter: I could similarly send you an exhaustive list, but most of the classics would already have been mentioned by one or the other. Apart from purely personal differences in taste, I was astonished to find "The Finding of Haldgren" mentioned here. I remembered that I found it melodramatic rather nightmarish, very unlikely and at times effusive - in fact, you'll gather I didn't like it much! With regard to "Citadel of Dreams"... might it not be very good policy to introduce another serial, as soon as you can think of an original theme? /Theme already evolved, after a suggestion from JFB to CSY had been passed on to Fantacynic - expected to start in "Fantast" any time now - and it's really original, believe me! /

THE GARGOYLE: We can now announce that "The Gargoyle", the threatened humour magazine, will definitely come out within the next few weeks. If you want to read the best fan material by the best of fandom's writers in a neat format, send 1/6d. to Dave McIlwain, 14 Cotswold Street, Liverpool 7. Maybe 3½d. will bring you a copy as a sample of what's in store. WRITE NOW!