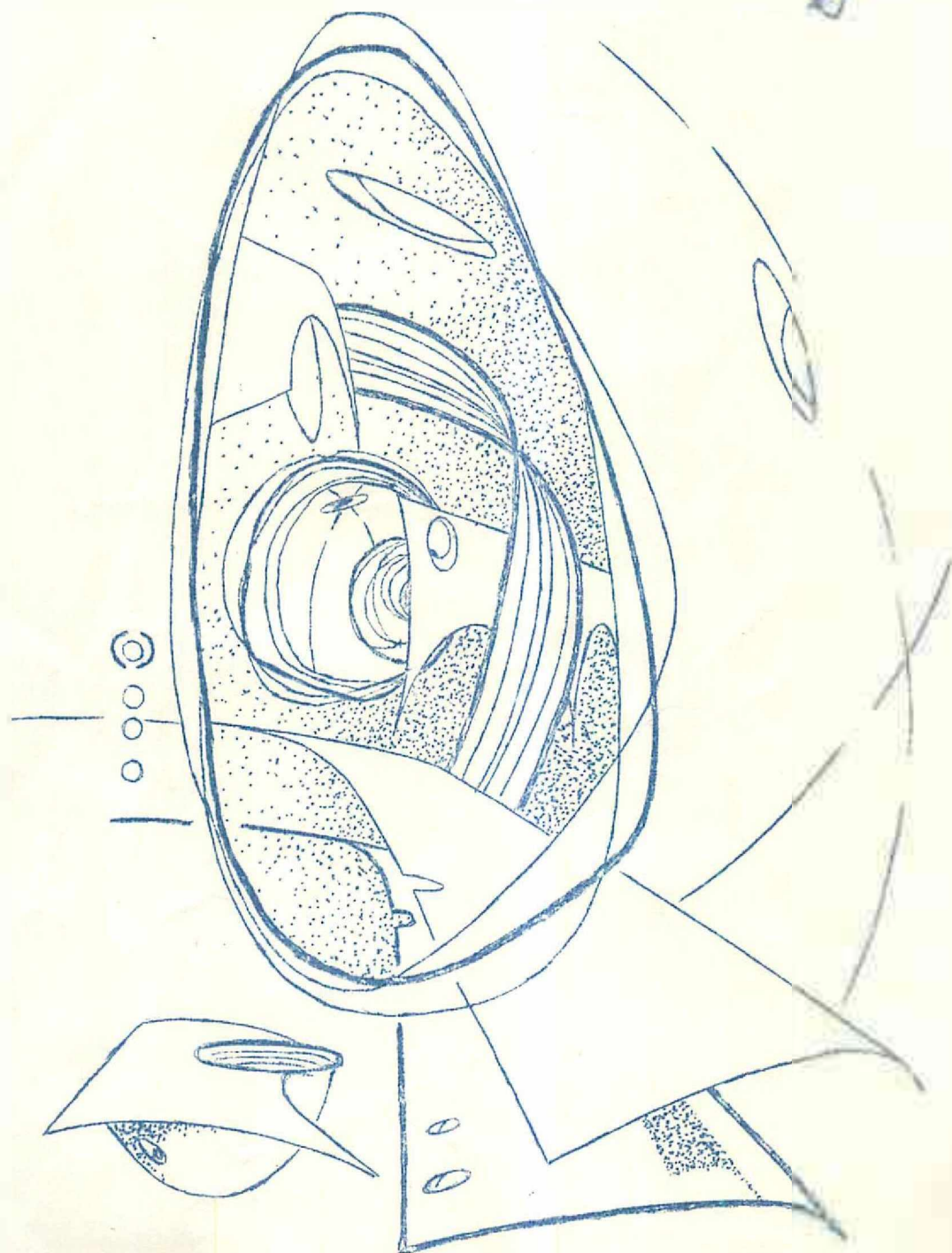


THE SCARR — 4 —



Interior. E.T. spaceship.

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He jests at SCARRS that never received a copy.
—Romeo & Juliet.

THE SCARR

Number Four

April 1964

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I WANDERED LONELY AS A BANTH

ARCHIE MERCER

O travelling companion mine,
What luck to meet again with you!
Our ways diverged in Chapter 9 —
And now it's chapter 22.
Let us be parted nevermore.
(At least till chapter 24.)

When first we went our separate ways,
'Midst foes unknown perchance I fell.
'Twas but the briefest of delays
Had only you been there as well,
But one alone could not prevail;
So I was cast in noisome jail.

In dungeon deep I found a friend
(A princeling of this land, no less),
So he and I our thoughts did bend
To the relief of our distress.
By stratagem we came forth free,
Then I lost him. (Or he lost me.)

Then rescued I from ghastly fate
A maiden you should recognise —
She you have chosen for your mate
(Albeit she thinks otherwise).
With her beside me, sweet and chaste,
I journeyed on across the waste.

She gave me news of sundry friends
Who used to wander with our band
And each of whom still somewhere wends
His way through this unlucky land.
I hope they'll turn up later on —
We'll need them for the denouement.

I journeyed with this maiden fair
For many a mile of well-used words,
Then she, to my profound despair,
Was carried off by manlike birds.
(Though it's occurred to me since then
They more resembled birdlike men.)

I could not follow through the air:
Upon the ground I was delayed:
Therefore, so far as I'm aware,
The birds (or men) still have your maid.
However, do not fear the worst —
My princeling friend may find her first.

So let us onward, you and I,
Through perils grim and dangers gory,
Until the proud usurper die
Upon the last page of the story.
And never let it be forgot —
We live meanwhile to serve the plot.

Confucius he say

A f T
T o A
O o F
M r F

TAKE ME TO YOUR LEADER

BOB
SHAW

FOR A LONG TIME after I practically gave up reading science fiction I tried to interest myself in other kinds of fiction, but without success. There was, for instance, all that James Bond stuff, which was entertaining enough in its own way except that I couldn't get used to identifying the characters by the brand of drinks and type of armament they used. There was always the hero (with his Lager in one hand and a lager in the other) who rescued the heroine (who had her gun in one hand and a gin in the other) from the villain (who had his 12-bore in one hand and 12 beers in the other).

Anyway, I finally discovered the perfect substitute for science fiction. It was newspapers! Until then I had thought of newspapers as being dull, unimaginative efforts, but, in fact, they possess all the ingredients that good SF should have. Good writing, humour, new concepts, sex — it's all there. The first three ingredients I mentioned are well displayed in this cutting from a recent issue of the Daily Herald in which James Cameron sends up Rab Butler in a truly science fictional manner:

MR BUTLER stands erect on the launching-pad, steaming slightly, awaiting the count-down. All his systems are go. The umbilicus linking him to reality is about to be severed.

Encapsulated within his nose-cone are the secrets of the impending international miracle. Mr Butler, the Foreign Minister, is off into orbit to change the world.

But Mr Butler has been the repository of many odd and make-shift jobs in his time, and most

he has nobly done.

But the one on which he is about to be spaceborne, according to the premier, is something so momentous, so apocalyptic in its terms of reference, that it might almost be mistaken for a Tory gimmick.

The Prime Minister is charging Mr Butler with "perhaps the biggest diplomatic operation there has been of all time. His aim is nothing less than to reverse the thinking & action of men throughout the ages."

Or how's this for an example of sexy material! — and not merely childish straightforward stuff but with undertones of "PSYCH," strange perversions, and sinister organisations lurking behind innocent fronts:

MALONE Golf Club, Dunmurry, Belfast, requires Youth as Barman (or Barmaid), live in, attractive conditions — Phone Secretary, 612758 or 612695.

That came from the Belfast Telegraph — a paper which goes into thousands of innocent homes, and yet they could hardly have been more open about it all. "Attractive conditions," indeed!

But perhaps the best newspaper items are those in which you don't need to actually read the small print of a story, because it is all summed up in the heading. Anybody who has ever seen a Flash Gordon film will be familiar with creatures like the Clay Men, the Tree Men, the Cat Men and so on. They were all pretty exciting but lost most of their impact due to the fact that they operated so far away — on the Planet Mongo and places like that. In comparison, just think of the horrific scenes conjured up by the following heading from an issue of the Belfast Newsletter:

APPLE MEN ATTACK BOARD OF TRADE

See what I mean? Flash Gordon just doesn't count against stuff like that. Another thing about newspaper headings is that they tend to be much more frank and earthy than most of magazines. One of my favourite examples of fearless reporting (which was actually discovered by Walt Willis) appeared in the Newsletter last year. It goes;

PEER BUYS TWO COMMODES

WHEN THE CHIPS WENT DOWN

SITTING IN THE QUIET LUXURY of my famed Irish Country residence (see pg 584 of "Celebrated Irish Residences," published by Vellum Press), I sometimes feel a touch of nostalgia for the two years I spent as a stranger in the strange land of Ulster. Perhaps this is because of the contrast between the customs there and the subtle nuances of good living that we enjoy here in Dublin.

Indeed, I can remember the occasion when this difference was very forcibly brought home to me. At the time, Walter and Madeleine were spending a fortnight at Castlerock, a well-known golfing and seaside resort on the Northern Coast of Ireland. In an effort to prevent them from suffering too severely as a result of the sudden withdrawal of both Scrabble and fan meetings, Bob and Sadie and I decided to go up and spend a Sunday with them. The diabolical revelations that were a direct result of that simple desire to bring succour to a couple of exiles from Belfast are even now hard to understand.

At the time, I was engaged in a protracted argument with the gentlemen of Her Majesty's Customs and Excise Department concerning my limousine, which, it had been decreed by the aforementioned hard-hearted body, was not allowed to show so much as its glittering front bumper in Northern Ireland until I had

IAN R MACAULAY

paid an exorbitant sum as import duty. As my Superb and Luxurious Vehicle was not available, we had perforce to make the trip to Castlerock in Bob's Superb, Luxurious, Veteran motor-car.

Don't misunderstand me: I have nothing against this vehicle, especially since Bob got rid of the man who used to walk in front carrying a red flag. That happened when Bob was going down one of the rather steep hills in Belfast. However, he got his brakes fixed afterwards and I've felt quite safe any time I've been in it since. Going for a trip in it always made me feel that I'd been caught in a time-warp and returned to a more gracious age. Sadie kept the flower vases in the side-windows filled with freshly-cut flowers and I found that the ritual of lighting the oil lamps became quite soothing once I got used to it.

Anyway, at eleven o'clock on a fine Sunday morning this magnificent equipage drew up outside my rooms in Belfast and I clambered up onto the front seat beside Bob, Sadie and Claire being in the back surrounded by all the equipment necessary to keep a five-year-old girl happy on a 70-mile car trip.

With his deerstalker set at a jaunty angle Bob delicately engaged first gear with a crunch and we set off amid the cheers of the assembled peasantry.

There was only one small incident on the whole journey: the car suddenly went into a lock-to-lock slide, leaving successive scars alternately on the banks at either side of the road. After a few hundred yards of this Bob dexterously brought the car back under control, mopped his brow and remarked, "Sometimes she weaves just a little." I prised my fingernails out of the upholstery, waved friendly back at the purple face of the driver of a ditched Jaguar which had been attempting to pass us at the start of the manoeuvre and muttered, "Really, I hardly noticed a thing."

We carried on, following the signposts, until we were in the vicinity of Castlerock, and then headed in the direction of the golf-course. Sure enough, there was a house overlooking the first tee and Walt was standing outside, idly decapitating daisies with a number three iron. After exchanging the customary greetings and being told by Walter how he'd got a hole in one only a couple of days before, we went in and sat down to a lovely meal of salad followed by wonderful salad sandwiches which Sadie had brought along to keep me going on the journey. Somehow I hadn't had much appetite for them until we got out of the car.

We sat down after the meal and chatted about the usual things and admired the view from the windows of the flat, which was a first-floor one. Walt pointed out the very tee from which he'd made his hole in

one stroke and also casually mentioned that the clubhouse had a bar. Bob and I sprang to our feet and implored him to lead us in that direction. The fifty-yard walk was in vain as the bar was closed, apparently on the grounds that no true golfer would wish to have a drink on a Sunday.

When we got back to the flat it was suggested that we should go out and investigate the amenities offered by the beach. Bob and I weren't used to this sea air and we were finding it rather tiring, but the others ignored our pleas and insisted that all go. Bob said that he'd love to go in for a swim, but that unfortunately he'd forgotten to bring a towel even though he had brought his trunks. The fact that he said this before we were out of the house shows that the sea air had dulled his usually alert mind, because a towel was thrust into his unwilling hands within about ten seconds. As we walked down to the shore he casually remarked at the top of his voice that it was funny how the temperature could drop so suddenly in Ulster. When we came within sight of the beach he turned up his coat collar, looked up at the sky, and asked if it had snowed during the past few days. Once we got onto the sand he threw off his jacket with a mad scream and vigorously organised games that kept us all so busy that we forgot to remind him to go swimming. On the way back to the flat he said several times that he would have loved a swim but didn't want the rest of us to be short a man for making up teams for the beach games.

By now it was getting close to tea-time and we decided to order our meal from the chip-shop just across the street from the Willis flat. We could then go and inspect the local historic ruin and when we came back bring the bags of fish and chips, sausages and chips, or even chips and chips, over to the house where Madeleine and Sadie would brew up tea.

Well, we went to the ruined castle, explored the (empty) wine-cellars and inspected the crumbling battlements. Then we drove back to Castlerock, Bob and I gradually coming out of the exhaustion induced by the heady sea air and cheered by the prospect of the approaching meal.

There's really just one way to eat chips -- straight from the bag with the fingers. Golden-brown, succulent chips with the fragrance of the vinegar rising from the open mouth of the bag. It's almost poetic! The bag retains the warmth and flavour around the chips until they actually begin the brief journey from bag to mouth. And then there's the pleasure of getting the last few crinkly fragments out of the corners of the bag purely by the sense of touch. Yes, eating chips like this is one of the eternal pleasures which still survives the crudities of the twentieth century.

Thoughts like these were running through my mind as Walt staggered

from the chip-shop with a huge parcel in his arms. He unpacked the separate little bags and we each selected what we'd ordered as Madeline handed round the cups of tea. My fingers were conveying the first few chips to my mouth when I realised with horror that the others had emptied their bags onto PLATES and were about to eat their chips with KNIVES AND FORKS!

At one time or another I've been in dockside pubs, or strange streets in Kilburn, or illicit shebeens in the remoter parts of the West of Ireland, and seen some pretty odd things. I've heard of groups of shifty people gathering in quiet suburban houses late at night for strange orgies and of the odd groups who set up their own little cultures away from the civilised world. But this sordid performance was taking place in a peaceful seaside village in Northern Ireland on a quiet summer's day. Not only that, the ghastly perversion was actually being performed in front of impressionable children, whose whole future lives might be twisted by a compulsion to empty chips from the bag onto a plate before eating them. It just shows how close the primitive is to the surface even with people you think you know well. Science fiction fans, even, falling prey to these weird desires.

Of course, it's a definite non-survival characteristic. I can imagine the scene after the nuclear holocaust as they slowly starve to death while searching for a plate to eat their chips from. Or fighting over a rusty and probably radioactive fork while the wild dogs steal the chips. If Bob Heinlein thinks he can do justice to the theme, he has my permission to try.

Naturally I protested at this tearing down of all the fences of civilised behaviour. I addressed them with emotion and begged them to return to the ways of trufen; I pleaded with them to abandon this decadence and to think about the future of the race. Remembering the films they must have seen, I even spoke of flouting the laws of nature and there being things that man was not meant to do.

It was no good. Bob was the only one to look even a little ashamed and he went no further than mumbling that he knew I was right but that several years of marriage made people get used to eating from plates.

All I can hope is that they will think about it and not allow their standards to sink any lower. Bob did seem pretty quiet on the way back to Belfast. He even let me drive for thirty or forty miles and sat with his eyes closed and fists clenched. I suppose he was regretting having allowed himself to drift into such habits.

There are other differences, too, between us quiet, cultured people in Southern Ireland and the inhabitants of Ulster. It isn't fair to blame them for their shortcomings in many cases; after all, they live in a harsher, more demanding part of the world and only time will bring them the refinements of our civilisation. Perhaps one or two may feel a pang of shame at some words of mine which reveal to them how they have been trampling roughshod over many of the finer things of life, like how to eat chips. If so, it will have been all worth while.

IN DECENT COMPANY

J. D. PEEBLES

WHEN I RECEIVED my copy of The SCARR and was asked for my opinion of its literary worth my chief criticism was that it contained no reference to SEX, surely the stuff "with which we are made of." The Editor then approached me — cautiously, I must admit, since I am a married man with a family: Would I find time to write something which would include a story to do with sex, if possible from my own personal experience?

As you can imagine it has been a difficult decision, but I have finally selected selected one which might find favour with the readers. It is absolutely true and comes at the end of this article.

But first a word about a Club I formed some years ago. The D.F.C. I called it at its inception. The initial letters, I hasten to explain, stand for "The Decent Fellows Club." This club is still going strong and indeed new members are being added to it every year. The strange thing is that I am not a member and have never been a member. I have gathered about me a small select band of non-members and from time to time a name is submitted for my rejection or approval. It is hard to keep the membership down.

The Club gets its name from observations which I have made down through the years, observations on certain of my friends and acquaintances. Where one of them would have little interest or understanding of SF, Music and the Arts, explanations, by his friends, would be offered in reply to my criticisms: "Yes, I know, but he's a helluva decent fellow." This phrase became in time "Decent Fellow."

The trouble with the average "Decent Fellow" is that he has got to

be a "decent fellow." He has no other claim to fame, as it were. I can imagine the non-plussed expression on his face were he to overhear a conversation between, for instance, any two readers of this magazine. He wouldn't be long in telling them what they were talking a lot of! The Director in the story that follows was a vintage "Decent Fellow."

So now that you've got the hang of it look around you and see if you can determine which of your colleagues and friends would qualify for membership, taking care, by the way, that you are not marked for membership yourself.

Now to the sex story which I promised. Some years ago I was at a loose end and applied for a book salesman's job, selling encycl—you know what—and I need hardly mention that I was accepted as a likely prospect and was given a week's training before commencing the job proper. On the first day of the training we were issued with type-written instructions: PAGE ONE — THE APPROACH. This consisted of calling at the door of the prospective customer's house in the afternoon when he was usually out at work. His wife would answer the door and the following conversation would take place:-

SALESMAN: Good afternoon.

HOUSEWIFE: Good afternoon.

SALESMAN: Am I speaking to Mrs Jones?

HOUSEWIFE: Yes.

SALESMAN: Have I been fortunate enough to catch Mr Jones in?

The housewife would then explain that her husband was at business, whereupon an appointment would be made for a suitable time after dinner when (we hoped) the prospect would be amenable to our sales talk. But it was emphasized to us that the approach was most important, seeing it was the first contact of the sales organization to the customer. Therefore a good deal of time was spent rehearsing it during the week, and on the Friday, when the best of the "trainees" would be selected and offered a position on the sales staff, the Director of the training class arranged a sort of "passing out," seated himself at his desk and acted the part of the housewife while each trainee said his part of the "approach." To further simulate realism we were each given the name of the actual prospect upon whom, if we were successful in this final test, we would be calling the following week.

I was given the name "Mrs Collins." And I went to the desk and said:

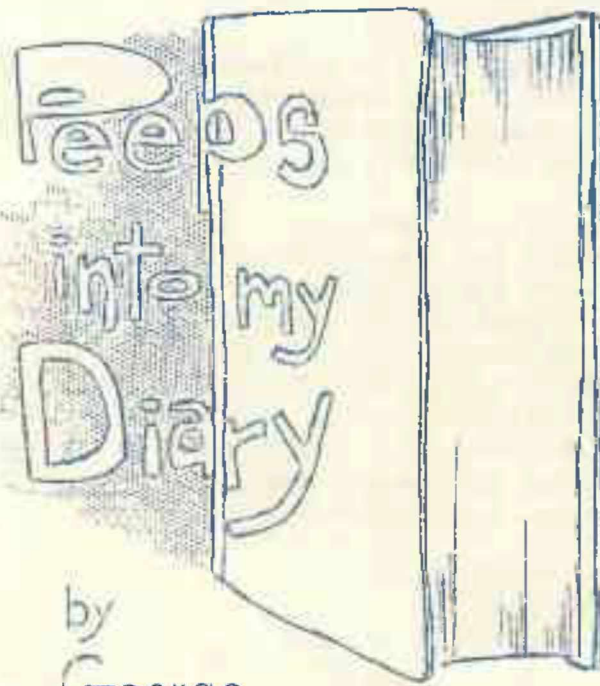
Good afternoon.

DIRECTOR: Good afternoon.

ME: Am I speaking to Mrs Collins?

DIRECTOR: Yes.

ME: Have I been fortunate enough to catch Mr Jones in?



by
George
Charters

1955

May 10 Tue John Greer has given me a copy of the works of William McGonagall. The title in full is POETIC GEMS SELECTED FROM THE WORKS OF WILLIAM MCGONAGALL, POET AND TRAGEDIAN, WITH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH AND REMINISCENCES BY THE AUTHOR, AND PORTRAIT. It is a paperback, published in 1951 in Dundee.

In a biographical foreword he tells us that he was born in 1830, his father being a poor but honest weaver. And this is his account of his discovery of his poetic talents:

The most startling incident in my life was the time I discovered myself to be a poet, which was in the year 1877. During the Dundee holiday week, in the bright and balmy month of June, when trees and flowers were in full bloom, while lonely and sad in my room, I sat thinking about the thousands of people who were away by rail and steamboat, perhaps to the land of Burns, or poor ill-treated Tarna-hill, or to gaze upon the Trossachs in Rob Roy's country, or elsewhere wherever their minds led them. Well, while pondering so, I seemed to feel as it were a strange kind of feeling stealing over me, and remained so for about five minutes. A flame, as Lord Byron has said, seemed to kindle up my entire frame, along with a strong

desire to write poetry; but the more I tried, the more strong the sensation became. It was so strong, I imagined that a pen was in my right hand, and a voice crying, "Write Write!" So I said to myself, ruminating, let me see; what shall I write? then all at once a bright idea struck me to write about my best friend, the late Reverend George Gilfillan; in my opinion I could not have chosen a better subject, there I immediately found paper, pen and ink, and set myself down to immortalize the great preacher, poet and orator. These are the lines I penned, which I dropped into the box of the "Weekly News" office surreptitiously, which appeared in that paper as follows:

W. McG., Dundee, who modestly seeks to hide his light under a bushel, has surreptitiously dropped into our letter-box an address to the Rev. George Gilfillan. Here is a sample of this worthy's powers of versification:-

Rev. George Gilfillan of Dundee,
There is none can you excel;
You have boldly rejected the Confession of Faith,
And defended your cause right well.

The first time I heard him speak,
'Twas in the Kinmaird Hall,
Lecturing on the Garibaldi movement,
As loud as he could bawl.

He is a liberal gentleman
To the poor while in distress,
And for his kindness unto them
The Lord will surely bless.

My blessing on his noble form,
And on his lofty head,
May all good angels guard him while living,
And hereafter when he's dead."

McGonagall appears to be most at home in describing beauty spots in and around Dundee, but he also gives many descriptions of places he visited. Here, for example, is his description of Balmoral Castle:

And Balmoral Castle is magnificent to be seen,
Highland home of the Empress of India, Great Britain's Queen,
With its beautiful pine forests, near by the river Dee,
Where the rabbits and hares do sport in mirthful glee,
And the deer and the roe together do play
All the livelong summer day.
In sweet harmony together,
While munching the blooming heather,
With their hearts full of glee,
In the green woods of Balmoral, near by the river Dee.

He had a great admiration for Queen Victoria, and even, in 1878, walked (in three days) to Balmoral to see her, an unsuccessful odyssey which he recounts in the foreword. This is a part of his "Ode to the

Queen on her Jubilee Year":-

Sound drums and trumpets far and near!
And let all Queen Victoria's subjects loudly cheer!
And show by their actions that her they revere,
Because she has served them faithfully for fifty long year.
All hail to the Empress of India and Great Britain's Queen!
Long may she live happy and serene!
And as this is now her Jubilee year,
I hope her subjects will show their loyalty without fear....

Therefore rejoice and be glad on her Jubilee day,
And try and make the heart of our Queen feel gay;
Oh! try and make her happy in country and town,
And not with Shakespeare say, "Uneasy lies the head that
wears a crown."

And as this is her first Jubilee year,
And will be her last, I rather fear;
Therefore, sound drums and trumpets cheerfully,
Until the echoes are heard o'er land and sea....

Therefore let all her lieges shout and cheer,
"God save our Gracious Queen!" for many a year;;
Let such be the cry in the peasant's cot, and hall,
With stentorian voices, as loud as they can bawl.....

Part of his poem on the death and funeral of Prince Leopold in 1884:-

Alas! noble Prince Leopold, he is dead!
Who often has his lustre shed!
Especially by singing for the benefit of Esher School, --
Which proves he was a wise prince, and no conceited fool.

Methinks I see him on the platform singing "The Sands o' Dee,"
The generous-hearted Leopold, the good and the free,
Who was manly in his actions, and beloved by his mother;
And in all the family she hasn't got such another.

He was of a delicate constitution all his life,
And he was his mother's favourite, and very kind to his wife,
And he had a particular liking for his child,
And in his behaviour he was very mild.

Oh! noble-hearted Leopold, most beautiful to see,
Who was wont to fill your audience's hearts with glee,
With your charming songs, and lectures against strong drink;
Britain had nothing else to fear, as far as you could think.....

First in the procession were the servants of his late Royal
Highness,
And next came the servants of the Queen in deep mourning dress,
And the gentlemen of his household in deep distress,
Also General Du Pla, who accompanied the remains from Cannes.....

of the battle of Tel-el-Kebir he says:-

Arabi's army was about seventy thousand in all,
And, virtually speaking, it wasn't very small;
But if they had been as numerous again,
The Irish and Highland brigades would have beaten them, it is plain.

'Twas on the thirteenth day of September, in the year of 1882,
Which Arabi and his rebel horde long will rue;
Because Sir Garnet Wolseley and his brave little band
Fought and conquered them in Kebir land.

The first shock of the battle was borne by the Second Brigade,
Who behaved most manfully, it is said,
Under the command of brave General Grahame,
And have gained a lasting honour to their name.....

Then the Egyptians were forced to yield,
And the British were left masters of the field;
Then Arabi he did fret and frown
To see his army thus cut down.

Then Arabi the rebel took to flight,
And spurred his Arab steed with all his might:
With his heart full of despair and woe,
And never halted till he reached Cairo.

The various bridges on the river Tay inspired many of his poems:-

Beautiful Railway bridge of the Silvery Tay!
With your numerous arches and pillars in so grand array,
And your central girders, which seem to the eye
To be almost towering to the sky.
The greatest wonder of the day,
And a great beautification to the River Tay,
Most beautiful to be seen,
Nearby Dundee and the Magdalen Green.

Beautiful Railway Bridge of the Silvery Tay!
Which will cause great rejoicing on the opening day,
And hundreds of people will come from far away,
Also the Queen, most gorgeous to be seen,
Nearby Dundee and the Magdalen Green.

Beautiful Railway Bridge of the Silvery Tay!
And prosperity to Provost Cox who has given £30,000 and upwards
away
In helping to erect the Bridge of the Tay,
Most handsome to be seen,
Nearby Dundee and the Magdalen Green.....

Beautiful Railway Bridge of the Silvery Tay!
And prosperity to Messrs Bouche and Grothe, the most famous
engineers of the present day.....

LETTERS

70 Worrall Road, Bristol 8, England.

Having recently received the third issue of THE SCARR, I was all set to send you a poscard of comment but there just happened to be this sheet of paper in the machine so I'll send five sixths of a letter instead. (That way it can still go for 2½d.)

When Ethel started talking about "ENT patients" for one wild moment I thought we were back in the Sector General Hospital — then I realised she must mean "ear, nose and throat" — and sanity was restored. However, my main comment this time is that I'm glad to see that you do have some satisfactory literary tastes inasmuch as you seem to approve of The 25th Hour and Dawn. Also, I'd never before realised that the other sector of Ireland (whatever it was calling itself at the time) had sent fire-fighting assistance to the North. This is the sort of thing that ought to be more widely known — though, come to think of it, it seems so obvious a thing to do from almost any viewpoint.

Merc as ever,

Archie.

Ward Two, Whittingham Hospital, Nr Preston, Lancs., England.

Thanks for my copy of THE SCARR 3. Painful pangs of soul-destroying guilt pervaded my distraught self upon realising the fact that I had completely failed to respond to the previous issue, alas! ((So who expects to get a letter for every issue?))

I am now freely circulating during the day and I'm kept busy making paper bags in the occupational therapy department, in addition to attending a full-length film show every Thursday. Makes quite a contrast with my previous round-the-clock seclusion with only my fanac to keep me company. It's a grand life, really.

I've had a few hair-raising experiences with cars myself but nothing similar to Walt's early parking problems. My own escapades have been limited to the fun-fair variety because I have a singular fixation for dodgem cars, though I wouldn't be seen dead driving a real car; I probably would be seen dead after a few minutes since I can't drive, but I'm a real expert at the wheel of a dodgem. You should see me weave androitly between slower moving or stalled fellow-drivers, with an uncanny knack for avoiding drivers who vent their pent-up frustrations by callously jarring other cars at every opportunity, with a mad gleam of eye, a crazy grin of determined mouth and a blood-chilling slobber of unrestrained delight every time they score a hit. Once I did let my attention stray and rammed the barrier, which promptly collapsed, thereby depositing me and my metal steed in a handy mud puddle laying in wait for me alongside the enclosure, but n-body was hurt apart from a liberal splattering of mud donated by the Divine Planner on an elderly bystander who had the misfortune to be near at the time.

Coverillo by Arthur (for TAEF) Thomson was good, but no match for the cover of SCARR 2, which was one of last year's most outstanding covers.

Best wishes,
Peter.

170 Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, Northern Ireland.

I have read in your excellent, though-not-of-course-to-be-compared-with-Hyphen-type fanzine, the piece by Ian McAulay about my driving and my car. I refer of course to the inferior plastic modern Ian McAulay, not the genuine Ian McAulay of Atlanta, Georgis, who graced fandom some ten years ago.

I am sure you will be very relieved to know that I have decided not to sue. This I may tell you is against the advice of my solicitor, my garage proprietor and the shade of Lord Nuffield, who communicated with me by knocking in my engine. The reason for my forbearance is that I hate to discourage eager young newfans like yourself. The fact that McAulay has no money — I hear he is the only nuclear physicist who has to offer Green Shield stamps with his atomic secrets — had nothing to do with it. Though I did naturally make allowances for the understandable jealousy of a man who only has a Ford Anglia for one who has a car like my Morris Minor, commended by no less a person than Boyd Raeburn Himself. Especially when his Ford doesn't even have an engine. (It is propelled by the violent oxidation reaction taking place in the rear bumper.

Besides McAulay's article the rest of your contents bloom into significance. I understand now that Berry got the way he is as a result of that duck-shooting expedition....so that's what they meant by "duck's decease"....and was interested to notice that a first edition of "Irene Iddeeleigh" was once worth £30. What I'd like to know is what it's worth now, because I have one. My grandfather, the one whose type I reverted to to the eternal delight of Reg Phillips, printed it for Mrs Ros.

Best,
Walt.

"Yonder Hill," Gracet, Va., USA.

Your magazine is just great — and sometime I may even read it.

One day the maid asked me how we pronounced the word KNIFE in Ireland. (She knew I came from there.) To make life more interesting I said, "Ki'nife." "Oh," she said, "Ki'nife, oh?" When she asked then about a spoon and I saw how gullible she was I told her that was "ki'spoon." Then of course "ki'fork." Then how about things like plates, she wanted to know. Here I drew the line and declared all other words were as we'd say them here. She said, "Oh, just ki'nives, ki'ferks and ki'spoons, eh?"

Slainte,
David.

Marsskovvägen 8, Stockholm K, Sweden

I have ~~just~~ ~~very~~ ~~great~~ ~~delicious~~ ~~pleasure~~ received a copy of your ~~delicious~~ ~~brilliant~~ ~~superb~~ ~~fantastic~~ publication. I cannot enough thank you.

You have a beautiful cover by Atom for TAEF. And you really have a beautiful, lovely, charming collection of words there. DACTYLS. What a word. Ohmigosh. Not to talk of such others as AMBIGUITY or SYNDACTYLISM

or RHODOMONTADE or...

Real the End of Time is very enjoyable: Berry is terrific

I suppose you do not have any backcopies left of The SCARR 1 or 2, and that, if you have, you don't want to waste them on a fugghead like me.

((No, not a fugghead. And I wish I could handle Swedish as well as you can English. And I'm sorry I do not have a proper diaeresis to put over the a in Norrskogsvägen. And what is the K after Stockholm for?))

all my best

John-Henri

500 Florida Ave., Lynn Haven, Fla., U.S.A.

I was so sorry to hear about your ordeal with your eyes, but I hope now you've discovered some of the advantages of defective vision. I manage to see quite well enough to do anything I want to do, but I find it impossible to do anything I consider unpleasant. For instance, I usually loathe outdoor sports, so when someone tries to coerce me into a game I look sad and say I wish I could, but the lack of depth perception plus the myopia... Of course, I do have to use considerable ingenuity in explaining why I can play ping pong but not tennis. And I find that if I really try, I can manage to overlook even dirty dishes and the ironing. I predict that soon you will find yourself quite unable to read anything like an overdue bill, but I'm sure you'll have no difficulty at all with the latest Hyphen. ((Hyphen? What's that?)) It just takes a little practice

Sincerely,

Suzanne.

40 Parrs Wood Ave., Didsbury, Manchester 20, England.

The information on this old Whitaker's Almanac is now of the sort that reads "Achievements of 1956 include the development of a new means of intensifying a beam of light by electronic devices at Cairo University. It has been named the Nasser."

I rather like your Amada Ros extracts, and wish I could read more. Are her books all out of print? ((Yes.)) I'd rather not ask at the library unless I have to. They'll probably get confused with Edmundo Ros and find me a book on Latin-American Rhythm.

Do you know the works of McGonagall? He was a Scottish pop-poet, although the term wasn't invented then. Indeed, I have just invented it now. I mean, he wrote horrible doggerel about current events, so horrible that it fascinates. ((If you look elsewhere in this issue you'll get an answer -- just a part of the Charterservice.))

Best wishes,

Sid.

11 Sussex Road, Silver Spring, Md.

SYNDACTYLIS! is the stranger in your word list. I also wondered about DIAERESIS, a plausible looking word for which I could think of no meaning. ((See above the two little dots above the "a" in Norrskogsvägen. To my surprise, Webster's 2d Unabridged doesn't know it either, not even in the footnotes! ((But the Oxford gives it. Now there's a dictionary...))

The SCARR was mildly entertaining in places altho Berry & MacAulay seemed to be writing under duress. Perhaps you chain them to the typewriter and wait for results. Shaw was better. His penultimate paragraph was well put indeed.

Good wishes,

123 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Md., U.S.A. 21740.

You apparently made a friend while in the United States. Somewhere between Bangor and Hagerstown, the sturdy envelope in which you had carefully protected the third issue of The Scarr suffered a rupture. Improbable as it sounds, the staples had somehow worked free from the paper that they are intended to subdue. But a postal employee, undoubtedly, rescued the fluttering scraps of fanzine and put them back into the envelope and I am fairly sure that they all reached me, although the loose sheets were quite badly mixed up and I was forced to do some detective work in order to re-assemble them in the proper manner.

Bob Shaw's article was splendid and meaningful despite the light approach. You would have received a terrible scolding from your readers if you'd published the essence of his article as it's published in textbooks on English compositions. The usefulness of the familiar essay is beautifully demonstrated by the way this instruction becomes pleasant reading.

No matter how authentic it may or may not be, your diary is much fun to read. ((It is authentic.)) I would like to see many more examples of Amanda McKittrick Ros' writing, none of which is available in this distant outpost. I reserve the right to suspect that she may be a hoax created by you, ((She is genuine.)) but it is still magnificent writing. I'm currently reading a lot of Jane Austen, and she has suddenly improved her style and attitude since I have read these excerpts from Irene Idlesleigh.

Yrs., &c.,
Harry.



Editorial

April,
1964

The
SCARR

Number 4

MOST OF THE READERS of this fanzine will have realised by this time that the Diary I keep is little more than a record, short and skimpy or long and wordy, of the books I read. With the majority I add no comment at all, but with some, as will be seen in this issue, I really go to town and write pages of stuff (usually quotations), not because the books are of literary merit, but because they are amusing, interesting, out-of-the-ordinary, or just plain bad! Which reminds me: I was telling the rest of Irish Fandom about a science fiction book I had read. It was really a terrible book. Afterwards Walt remarked, "George, I think you like bad science fiction!" And I realised that I did. Perhaps this qualifies me for some kind of Hall of Shame Award, but I wonder — am I the only one?

It is a fact that ever since I can remember I have liked the odd, strange or unusual in books. Probably that is the reason why I like books like Irene Riddesleigh, Grant Uden's *Strange Reading*, Frederick Kennedy's *Norah*, McGonagall's *Poems* — and a whole raft of others, including a lot of bad SF!

Oddly I don't like bad Crime or Westerns...

There was quite a lot of things I meant to mention in this here Editorial, such as the fact that I don't get enough letters (or even postcards), or that this here editorial is in such an unusual place because I forgot about it, or that I still haven't got the hang of using a stylus. But there isn't room so let it go.

Well I be glad to get this issue mailed out! I have been working seven nights a week as well as cutting stencils and running them off, and I'm tired. Bought some seeds some weeks ago to put in my garden and haven't had time yet to do so. In any case it's been too wet to do any gardening. Mind you, although we get plenty of rain, it's not so bad now as it used to be in Ireland. Long ago there was a king in each of the four provinces of Ireland and an Ard-ri, or High King, over all. So, all the time, it was reign, reign, reign, reign, reign.

Slainte,

Geo

