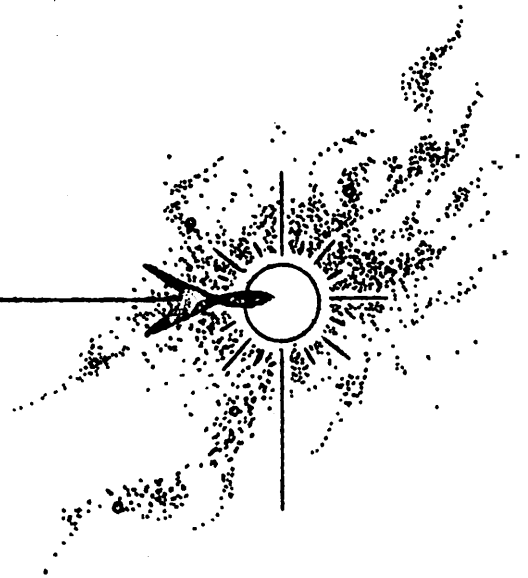
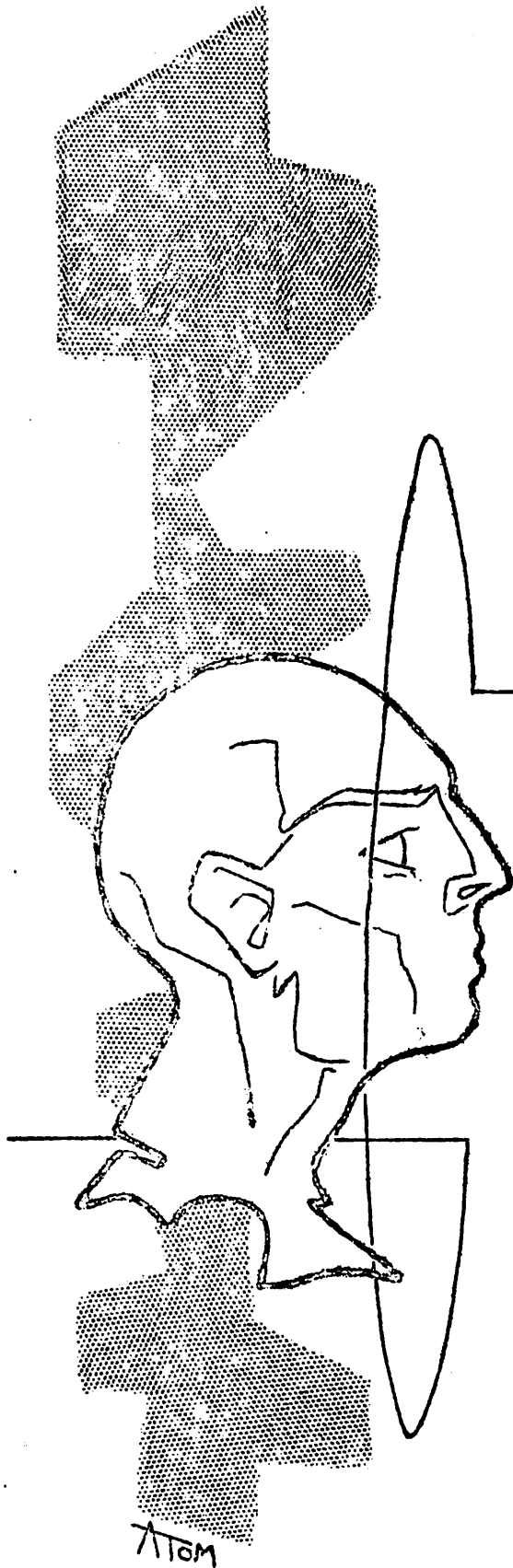


SCOTTISHE

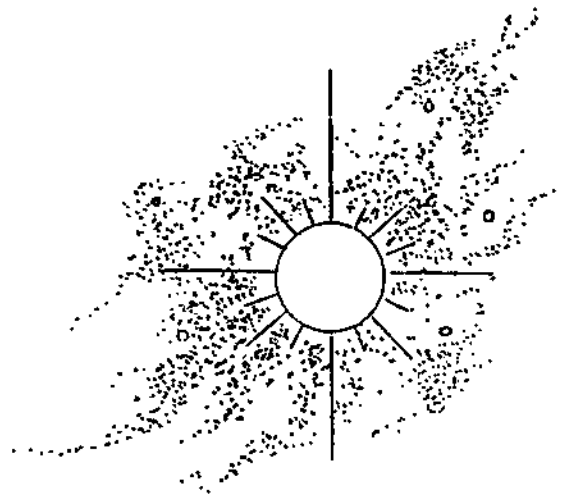


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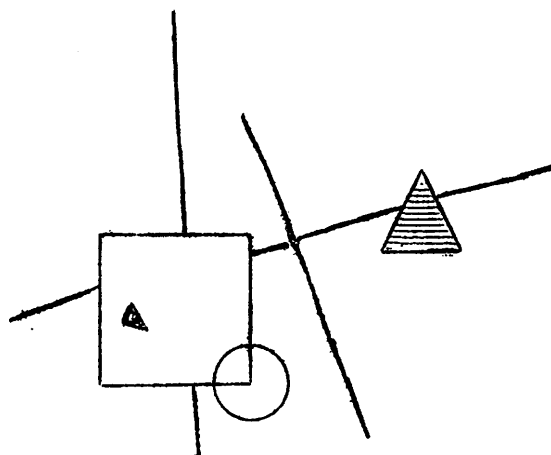
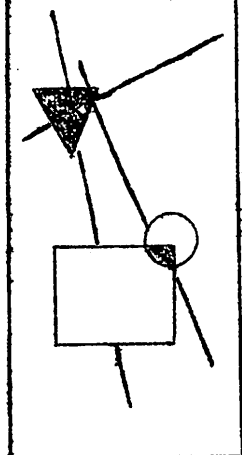
Bletherings.....by Ethel
MachiaVarlay.....by Brian Varlay
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CREDITS

All Artwork by Atom



BLEATHERINGS



On the 26th Ompa Mailing.....

Amble:Mercer: What I like about your mailing comments is, you give me the feeling that you try to judge the zine as a whole, and give some appreciation to the editor. So you switched to the "Times" after the death of the "News Chronicle". Brian Varley switched to the "Guardian" You would like that much better I'm sure! Why don't you draw fishes any more? Do you realise that you are the fifth oldest member in Ompa? I am the seventh, and if John Roles stays away for good - I have a horrible feeling he will - I shall then be the sixth oldest! Faithfully you go on with your comments, and I don't think they are appreciated as they deserve.

Burp:Bennett: A slim Burp, but I guess that is explained by the work you are doing on "Colonial Excursion". I wonder just how many Ompans took the "News Chronicle"? You do not say what you switched to, I am heavily recommending the "Guardian", the best paper I have ever read. I liked your cartoon on the cover, and your subject matter is always of interest. You would have made a good reporter had you not been a teacher.

Erg:Jeeves: Ah! colour, and a good cover! I chuckled at your welcome home to Eric, and amused myself imagining his reply, first word etc no doubt. Glad to read the history of the Soggies, and pleased at their success. Yes Scottishe was Schottische, but for the first issue only - do you remember that long back? I dropped it after the 2nd issue, because I could never remember how to spell it. Your comments are constructive, but mainly towards the production, still expert illo criticism is useful.

Eye Tracks:Locke: Knowing that you will soon be abroad your first words make

me feel - 'tis as well the future remains dark to us! Hope you can continue in Ompa, I cannot understand why you think "Jurgen" has remained famous only because of the original sensational publicity. It is a well written book and the author has many profound observations to make about men and women. Wise words in your mailing comments, you are at least thinking about them, not just churning them out. Why an index on your first lines? I know I will never want to emulate your book-buying habits, but I find it fascinating to read about. So don't step if they do not draw much comment. We all like bookshops after all.

Gloom:Deakinger: To answer your question first. The heavy covers for my last issue was from a ream given to me by the salesman who sold me my Gestetner. He also gave me a ream of foolscap and a ream of airmail. Now that you have made a list of the Ompans you have met, how about a candid word picture of each? I would also like some scenes from your University life. There now, you won't have to worry about what to write about next will you?

Kobold:Jordan: I don't understand the oever, but welcome to Ompa any old how. Now if you continue to tell us about University life in Sheffield, we ought to be able to compare it with Mike's, and that would be rather intriguing. Always like book reviews, so approve of that department. Would you really only like me to comment upon your subject matter? Wouldn't you wish to know that I, at least, am glad to find you can write in good decent English?

Marselo:Haves: Mmm, thats a pretty horrible layout for your comments, which are very disjointed, and goodness, why bother to give the addresses? They are already in Off-Trails. Those corny jokes as fillers, tch. Another solution to the problem raised by Vance Packard in the book you review, is magazines like our "Which?". They give you a careful unbiased opinion of the worth of the various articles you can buy. That 'anonymous pro' writes a good article one guaranteed to make faneds think. You might read it again where he says that writing is work. Why be content to leave it all to others?

Seetalog:Wilson: Glad you have come to join us and bring a little colour into our lives. Pleased with the way your introduced yourself, now tell more about Helen Wesson. Has she any other activity than FAFA? Enjoyed your book reviews it is odd that "Jurgen" should crop up twice in one mailing. Yes, do review it at length, I always like to know what others got from it. You seem a lively addition.

Some Of The Best From Quandry:Lightman: This I name Top of the Mailing, yessir. The best bits were Lee on the editorial we, the "Harp's" classic report on his classic 'printers' pun. I always like to die laughing at his final sentence in this. The only one I found disappointing was J.T.Olivers, I wonder if this means that 'faanish' fiction is liable to date. I would like another selection from Quandry, if you have the time to spare.

UL:Metcalfe: Welcome to Ompa, and this "I won't introduce myself, it would be too boring" is false modesty. So neat, well of course. Ruth gave a good Pitt. Can report, but I am puzzled as to the significance of spelling 'folk' as 'filk'. Too soon to tell what you will be like in Ompa, I'm very hopeful.

Vagary:Gray: I enjoyed your long natter, and admire the way you attempted to wind all the ends up from when you were away. I don't agree with some of your opinions - like the Aldermaston marchers - but it is on ground that has been too well gone over already. Sandra's article really arouses curiosity rather than satisfying it. What does she mean by "occult danger"? Or, the "black lodges"? Are they supposed to be dangerous? In what way? I don't believe in occult power. Do you? Think you can get Sandra to write another article to answer some of these questions? I am glad to see Vagary back, it has always been a stimulating member of Ompa.

Vert:Mayne: You criticise well, so do keep it up, I know it takes time, but Ompa has few people who are able to do so. I never heard of an Angry Young Man who was left a fortune by an American millionaire. Your history of the Beats was fairly interesting, would have been more so had you included some of your personal opinions on the subject. This is a quite good letter substitute but is only so-so as an Ompazine.

Viner:Donahce: I have welcomed you into my life and fanzine file already. This looks very like HAB, a wee version. I have been quietly amused by the "Beatfen story, I figure everyone can take out of it the meaning that they want! Wise words on mailing comments these. Perhaps it is because there has been so much bitterness in the feuds here that controversy is treated in a bland manner. It is also the safest thing to do. When Sandy Sanderson wrote in a highly critical and belligerent manner about Eric Bentcliffe, he earned himself a vast deal of unpopularity. On the whole I think they wereright. Things that are written can hurt much more than the spoken word. It is also rather hard when you find a hobby you like to be suddenly pitched into a quarrel. Mundane can be disagreeable enough goodness knows.

Postmailing: Savoyard:Pelz: You give a very neat introduction to yourself, so welcome to Ompa. I admire the free verse, am an Archy fan. I liked the way you so thoughtfully introduced your contributors. Your mention of the book "Silver-lock" is confusing to usns who have not read it. Better if you had explained first. Nice to have a member who is another with a specialised interest.

As I mention elsewhere, I am the seventh oldest member of Ompa, and for the last few railings, I have been seriously considering leaving it. There is something wrong with Ompa, it is no longer a close association of people. The members come and go so quickly I have to look up Off Trails to see who is in and who is out. I gather that the Trimble's are leaving us almost before they are in! Why do people leave Ompa? Well, they don't usually bother to give their reasons, or cite a too busy life. So I must fall back on my own dissatisfaction as perhaps containing a clue.

When I first entered Ompa I was very proud to be invited - what! - in the same Apa as Willis, Bulmer, Clarke, and Harris - it seemed unbelievable to me. I at once bought a duper, and for a long time had to struggle with it alone, enduring the criticism of my bad reproduction. By the time I had left Glasgow for London, I had grasped the fundamentals of duplicating. There I also got hints on stencil-cutting, the use

of correctine and a dictionary, margins and all the little details that go up to making a neat and legible fanzine. With the advent of my electric machine at last I might receive from Ompa what I had hoped for from the beginning.

What was that?.. Some criticism of my writing, that's all I wanted. I didn't really care whether it would be approving or not, all I wanted was to know what others thought. And, what did they think of the zine as a whole? Occasionally Achee would mention that Scot was one of his favourites, and with that I had to be content.

I remember once after a mailing had come out, meeting Ken Potter. He told me that he thought what I had written was the best in the mailing. How elated I was! How thrilled! You may be sure I never saw this written anywhere though.

Yes, there is the sum and total of my dissatisfaction with Ompa - in the mailing comments. They don't make me feel a part of something, it is like sending your zine out into a vacuum. Let's analyse this mailing - 11 members gave comments, of which 6 are definitely on subject matter only. When I broke it down I found: - Mercer: Good diverse comments. Bennett: Not all were mentioned and some briefly, but he did sum up at the end. Jeeves: Mostly on the illos and production. Locke: Has thought about M.C. suggests research as for a literary project. Deckinger: Subject matter only. Jordan: Thinks M.C. should be only on specific points. Hayes: Poor comments. Metcalf: Subject matter only Gray; lapse of time here, but she was always discursive and good. Mayne: Good criticism, but not on Ompa. Donahoe: Comments on subject matter only, but has been thinking about M.C.

As it happened, the first zine I opened was BURP, and when I read the short comment on my last Scot, I tell you truthfully, I swore! Am I being selfishly egoistical in wanting more than this? Should I turn Scot into a generalzine and send it out to fandom at large, I should not only receive fanzines in return as I do now in Ompa, but also many interesting letters of comment. These would give me some indication of the worth of what I am putting out. I ran off extra copies at the last mailing and sent them out, and was gratified at the response. Why, I have even received letters of comment on my Haverings, which has been purely a reviewzine.

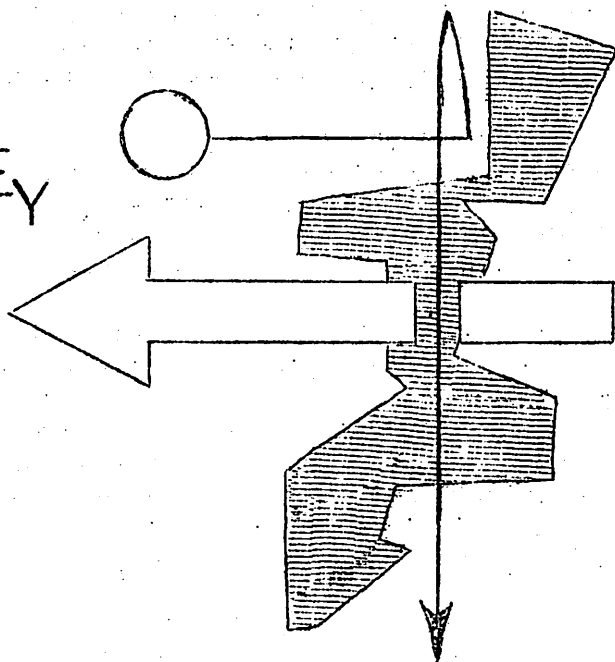
Well I hope you will all discuss this, and let me know if you think I am 'way out'. Perhaps you have a different explanation for the rapid turnover in Ompa?

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Filler:

A man writes better operas and poetry and books;
The girls don't shine as painters or as playwrights or as cooks
A man can keep his temper when a woman's in a huff
But he can't pretend he loves you when in fact he's had enough".

from "The New Statesman".

MACHIAVARLEY



During the couple of weeks around Christmas I acquired four or five brand new pocketbooks which were first read then either slipped behind a cushion, dropped under my chair or parked on the sideboard. When a burst of energy prompted me to go around picking up all these stray objects which so mysteriously accumulate when you're not looking, I ended up clutching these books and wondering where the hell to put them. The bookcase and bookrack were jammed solid and the cupboards were overflowing with the recently harvested debris.

Easing myself into a comfortable position, the better to consider the problem, my eye ranged over the well-stuffed bookcase. Not too many months ago this bookcase had been half empty, its vacant shelves making an ideal repository for an aging pair of slippers, a cheese dish (you show me the mouse that can open a heavy glass sliding panel) and my emergency supply of tinned beans. Where, I wondered, had the space gone to? I hadn't bought a book in years, the occasional paperback yes, but no hard cover volumes.

Looking at the bookcase again I suddenly realised that over half the space was taken up with paperbacks, slowly, insidiously. half a crown at a time, these slight, delicate-looking books had taken over my bookcase. Yet they were strangers to me, what did I know about them? Whose pocket was I filling with my pocket - book money?

Coincidences often occur in the course of normal events and I wasn't surprised to come across some heated discussion on the subject of paperbacks in the correspondence columns of the "Times". What seemed to be annoying various authors and publishers was the present-day trend for public libraries to put a

hard-cover on a pb and stick it on the shelves for public borrowing. The idea of 50 or more people reading a book which only cost 2/6d was, it was suggested criminal and that if the idea progressed to the point where libraries started to wait for the pb edition then the poor author would be reduced to changing his profession to the more lucrative trade of, say, being a porter in British Railways.

A final blast from Sir Allen Lane (chairman of Penguins) virtually ended the correspondence. Regarding books produced by his company from Nov. onwards he said "That they shall not, without written consent of the publishers first given, be bent, resold, loaned out or otherwise disposed of in a mutilated condition or in any unauthorised cover, by way of trade"

Reading the correspondence titillated my appetite for more information, so I did a little research and came up with the following information, which frankly I find astonishing.

In the first six months of 1960 the top five publishers (Penguin, Pan, Corgi, Panther and 4-Square) brought out 355 titles. Of these 61 were brand-new books and the rest reprints or paperback editions of hard cover volumes. This is amazing when it is considered that other well-known publishers, Arrow, Ace and Collins, to name but three are excluded.

A very reliable estimate expects that in 1960 as a whole some 80 million paperbacks will be produced and of these Penguin and Pan will produce 12 million each. This estimate was given before the "Lady Chatterley" case so I expect that figure will be rather a low one.

Having dealt with such large numbers it seemed an anti-climax to start thinking in terms of half-crowns, but I was still curious to know who got what of my money when I bought a book. Fortunately I discovered that Penguins had anticipated my needs and issued details of how the half-crowns were split up. A complicated mass of decimals is rather overfacing so here, simply, is the main breakdown.

Retailers and Wholesalers profit	10½d
Cost of production	11d
Overheads	5d
Taxation	½d
Net profit	½d
Authors Royalty	2½d

Any arithmetically-minded soul who thinks this adds up to 2/5½d is dead right, but if he can suggest how I should apportion such items as 0.092d I'll amend my figuring.

The retailers and wholesalers share seems rather large, but in many cases a bookshop only manages to stay open by virtue of it's profit on paperbacks, and I'd be the last one to want fewer bookshops.

The author's cut doesn't seem too bad, especially if your name happens to be Monserrat or McLean, but on average the author can consider himself lucky if he gets £250 in royalties from a paperback edition. If his book happens to be the result of a years frustration and mental torture, then it seems pretty poor recompense.

Which pretty well brings

my investigations to a close, but I wonder if you, like I did, thought that paperbacks were a recent innovation started by Penquin in the middle 30s. In case you did you might be interested in a Leipzig publisher by name of Bernard Tauschmitz, who was producing paperback reprints of well-known British and American authors in 1841.

Oh yes, what happened to those books I was sitting holding in my hand? Well, I finally propped them up on the window-ledge in the toilet, together with several others which have come my way. Trouble is that now when visitors call its OK for a couple of hours then they pop out for a minute and thats the last of them until they come in to collect their coats!

XX
Recommended Book:

The Sugar Pill: by T.S.Matthews.Fublished by Gollancz 1957 18/-

The writer is a former editor of TIME, now living in London. His book makes a study of two newspapers THE DAILY MIRROR and THE GUARDIAN. His purpose is to show by their example what the press in general is and does. These two papers represent each 'end' of the press. On the one hand the popular tabloid and on the other the 'quality' paper. The MIRROR has the largest daily circulation in the world, and the GUARDIAN is probably the most respected paper in Britain. The author first gives a discussion of journalism in general and the claims that are made for it, he then gives a very readable history of both papers and he introduces some of the men who work for them. He takes one issue of each paper for the same day and gives it's contents in detail, a very salutary experience. He sums up the good and bad points of each paper. His own conclusions are that the power of the press is a lot less than is generally thought, that it is more a form of entertainment than information, and that "it is mildly habit-forming and so newspaper readers become addicted to it". He says "They are in a sense the eyes of the community, but their eyesight is often astigmatic, myopic, colour-blind, or in other ways unreliable.They sometimes seem to be fomenting bad feeling and worse behaviour, but their direct influence on manners and morals is much feeblor than it is thought to be: they are in fact not so much influential as representative."

About the two papers he finishes up by saying..
"I can understand how a young man would gladly give his eye-teeth for a job on the GUARDIAN. And for a job on the MIRROR? Well, maybe one eyetooth. I'm sure it's a lot of fun to work on the MIRROR, but on the GUARDIAN I think there is more and better fun. Nearly any work is good work if you like it and can do it well and won't be arrested for doing it. The all-out effort that goes into a great many jobs is as near an act of poetry as most of us will get, however prosaic the result turns out to be. The best thing about a newspaper is the good work that goes into it"

A good book for GUARDIAN readers like myself, a salutary book for those NEWS CHRONICLE leftovers who turned to such silly papers as THE TIMES, and a very interesting book for anyone who likes to see behind the scenes in the newspaper world.

warblings

Walt Willis

I Remember Me.

You will all remember from the last gripping instalment how things stood in May 1950. Walter A. Youngfan had got into correspondence with Eric Frank Russell and was trying to manoeuvre him into expanding some of his remarks into an article for Slant, with all the Machiavellian subtlety of a hog rooting for truffles. The reply was prompt, two pages long, and friendly and interesting, but crystal clear on the truffle situation.....

"Reason why "people like me" often don't respond to letters is that they've found from sad experience that no confidence is respected, and that they're likely to be quoted, or half-quoted, or even mis-quoted, for the sake of creating a fancied scoop in a fan-mag. That, sir, is the surest way to make any writer clam up. Of course, if said writer turns out something specifically for the said mag, it is different - he then has some control over what he is saying rather than is alleged to have said. But please don't come back at me asking for an article. I did them years ago, would like to do them today and occasionally do if the time and inspiration come together, but mostly they don't. I am very hard pressed for time these days."

He went on to defend Campbell, without actually denying in so many words that it was he who had rejected Dear Devil, and to discuss some other things which you'll probably be able to identify from my reply.

"Well now, touching Mr Campbell (to think that the day should ever come when

I of all people should try to elast this ikon) I realise that there may be people so lost in turpitude as to like the stories I dislike, but I consider myself a fairly average asf reader and I assume that asf has tried to please a certain section of the reading public who don't like the more pulny story. Either asf is changing it's policy or Campbell is falling down on the job, because the stories I have in mind are not good by asf's standards. Apart from that moreover stories which have been both commercially and artistically good have been rejected by jwc and acclaimed by other mags. I base this on statements by the editors themselves in their own magazines. Manly frankness is the fashion among them today. Another complaint I have against Campbell is that he nowadays just throws the magazine at you. Three or four years ago every big story got a terrific build-up beforehand. You didn't take it all too seriously but it was nice to feel that the editor was all out to raise interest. And it was nice to feel that things were happening, even if they didn't turn out as big as they were billed. Nowadays all we get is a few tired cracks about the inelasticity of type-metal or the difficulty of comparing apples with oranges or whatever cliché he happens to have set up in type. I am glad to see that you agree that there is too much blood is s-f. But on looking through these old issues of asf the other day I was reminded that you were unnecessarilly blood-thirsty yourself once. In THE UNDECIDED to be exact. A lot can be forgiven such an excellent story, but were you not very cruel, vicariously, to the alien soldiers? I know aliens are often considered fair game --like Jews and gypsies in Germany -- but surely it is obvious that the wholly evil aliens of the more naive stories like those of E.E.Smith are a juvenile concept. Any race which lives a highly organised community life must have the virtues which make that life possible--consideration for others and respect for public opinion. Conscience. Tolerance. Possible we should start a movement for the prevention of cruelty to bems. Its not a purely hypothetical question, even if we never encounter a flying saucerfull of monstrosities. My point is that the frame of mind that aliens are murderable and torturable just because they are different is very easily acquired and hard to get rid of. Easy to acquire because it pleases the subconscious and hard to lose because once the first million have gone into the gas chamber it's difficult to entertain the concept that possibly you have made a mistake. Possibly I have a bee in my bonnet about this question but I was very impressed by Huxley's story TIME MUST HAVE A STOP. It seems to me he is right that even the smallest of one's actions may have infinite repercussions. It may for example have been a malacious story told to Hitler in his youth that resulted in Aushwitz, and every one of one's actions should be judged in that light."

I can't remember whether I was still hoping to get material out of Russell or whether I had now for once no ulterior motive. I suppose it's possible. Maybe I had even reconciled myself to developing my own authors, because things were going well. Palmer had actually paid money to Clive Jackson to reprint his "Swordsmen of Varnis" from Slant 4 and our other bright star, Cedric Walker had sold a longer story to the revived Marvel, and altogether we all looked to be advancing towards a roseate dawn. Whatever happened?

But I see now that in June I was after Chandler too. I found his address somewhere and wrote admiring a story called Haunt.

Another correspondant was Mike Tealby. Floughing through a 4-page letter in purple ink, I see he was commiserating with me about contemptous reviews of

our fanzines by Merwin in TWS (we thought Merwin read the fmz) and that I was already offering to reprint his covers for him. He wanted a sphinx, but settled for a pyramid.

I tried to conclude the EFR story for the time being. In mid-June he wrote again defending Campbell, discussing editor and author problems, and defending 'The Undecided' on the ground that the aliens were aggressors. I was getting more confident.....

"Dear Eric,

(As you say, to hell with diffidence) I must spring to the defence of my beloved bems. I suppose you think you know all about the set-up just because you wrote the story, but listen! WHOSE PLANET WAS IT ANYWAY? So they defended themselves when invaded. The fiends! "Cet animal est tres mechant. Quand il l'attaque li se defend" As far as I can gather from your garbled account of the affair these alien bods were going along quietly minding their business, keeping themselves to themselves in a most gentlemanly fashion, save only for their friendly overtures to terrestrial spacecraft. Even when those were uncouthly rebuffed there is not even a suggestion that they raised a tentacle against the craft which had cut them dead. Now all of a sudden homo and his menagerie of other sapiens lands on his planet. Obviously a scout, if not the advance guard of an invasion from these sinister monsters. Even then they merely send one lone representative to test the defences. This courageous soldier is horribly murdered by the goothirsty terrestrials. I ask you, is this cricket?

Coming back to our discussion about diffidence, I should have thought the famous would regard it as a virtue almost as worthy as it is rare. From the other side, you certainly need a thick skin to dispense with it. There was the fellow here who was a great admirer of the poet Ezra Pound. Read every instalment of the cantos as they came out and was generally what you might describe as Pound foolish. Well, one day Ezra's latest effort was published and this chap found a mistake in one of the esoteric references. Also an opportunity. He sat down and concocted a letter to the master, full of humble worship and also pointing out with a certain amount of false modesty the slight mistake. In anxiety he awaited. Would the great man reply? Would he deign his humble admirer the privilege of a personal letter, perhaps later to be published to his immortality in the LIFE AND LETTERS? Yes! In a short time an envelope came, addressed in the handwriting only a poet could think up. Tearing it open with shaking fingers, he read: "Dear Sir, I think you are a bloody S++t." ...and so on, for another couple of closely typed foolscap pages. I apologise for the coarse Pound anecdote in this refined and ladylike fanzine, but no doubt Ethel will substitute asterisks for that four-letter word and, as you'll see later that anecdote turned out to be quite important. One wouldn't have thought so at the time, because EFR was quiet for a month and then wrote, on 18 July: and for once I quote in full.....

Dear Bro. Willis,

I'm getting too pressed for time to keep it up - so accept this Wesso original by way of a consolation prize.

sincerely

Eric F Russel. "

Wartlings 14

The Wesso original was an enormous detailed drawing but I hated the sight of it I considered that I had been given the brush-off in about as final and insulting a way as possible. Whether it was my guilty conscience or not, it was quite obvious to me at the time that the reference to a "consolation prize" meant that he believed I'd been after another "prize" from him, that he was now bored with my antics as one gets bored with a dog doing his tricks, and he was paying me off to keep me quiet. I never even wrote to thank him for the Wesso.

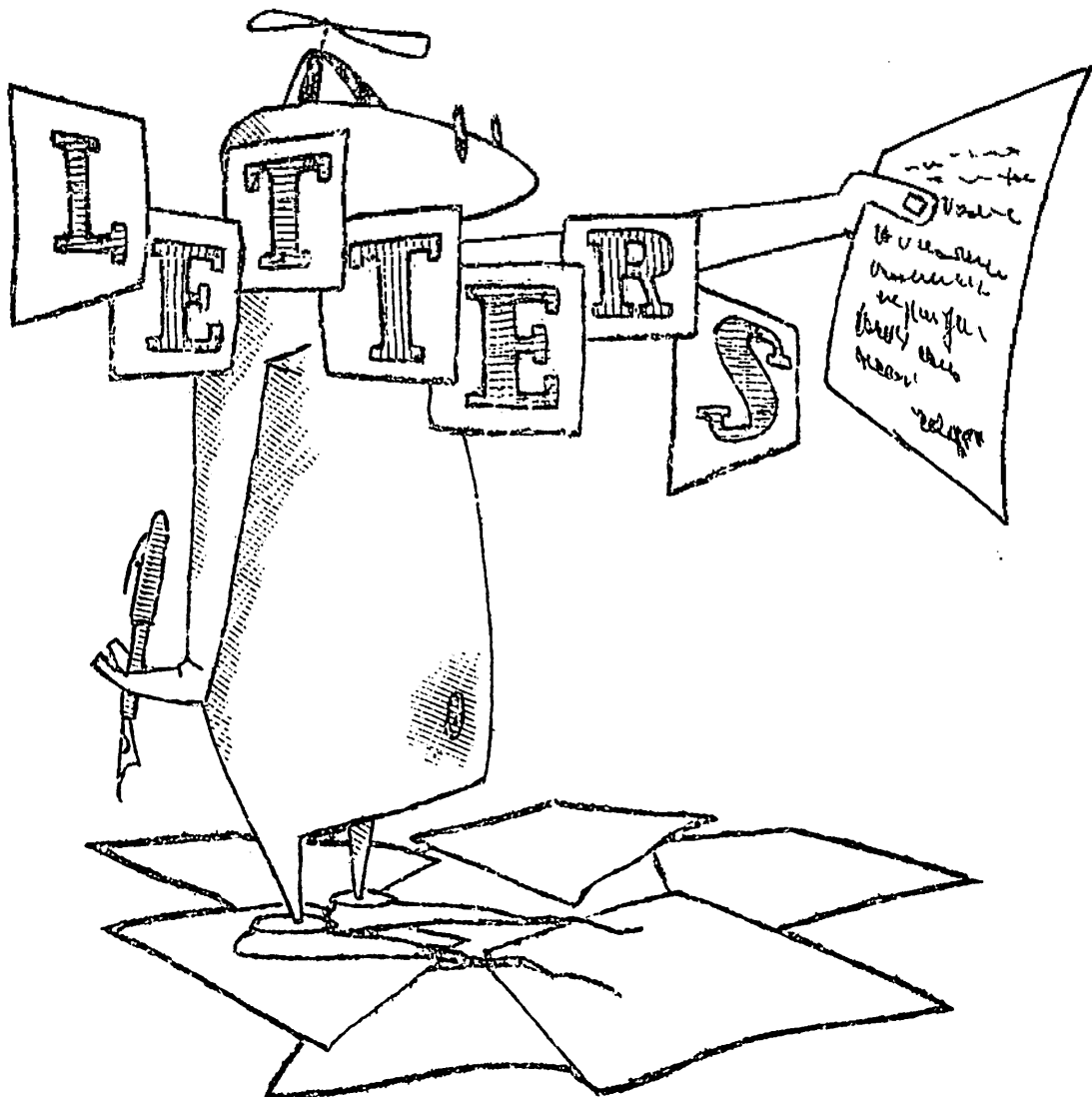
So ended that phase with EFR. I was so disheartened that I never even replied to Chandler when he wrote a friendly letter thanking me for my comments on Haunt recommending some of his stories he preferred himself and passing on an anecdote about a Pilot friend of his who had claimed to know Chandler the writer and that he was a Chief Officer in Shaw Savill's. "Rubbish" said his messmate, "whoever heard of any Mate in Shaw Savill's being able to read or write?"

But then, on August 11, EFR wrote again.

"Greatly enjoyed that salty Pound anecdote of yours, I passed it on to Tiffany Thayer who is a friend of Pound and sees him quite often. Today, Thayer writes back saying it is probably authentic because "the old boy is fully capable of it and was never constituted differently" This makes me happy I like to think that some of the world's characters are real. Did you get that Wesso drawing I mailed you? Or have your censors (the Pope's Own Fusiliers) seized it and burned it? "

I wrote back apologising for not having acknowledged the Wesso, but without explaining, and saying I hoped to be passing through Liverpool soon...fishing for an invitation to call. But that first trip of mine to England had better wait another instalment.

Walt Willis.



*****#***

Sid Birchby, "Thanks for H.No 2. I noticed your remark that the atom bomb
1, Gloucester Ave. might perhaps have been dropped on to a relatively uninhab-
Levenschulme ited part of Japan, rather than on a city. This point has
Manchester been argued hotly for the past 15 years & will doubtlessly
*****continue in dispute for the next. With what conclusion?
None that I can see. Whether it would have achieved the same speedy surrender
depends on the Japanese psychology, and no one yet can really fathom that,
although there is currently a great deal of noise from experts who are trying"
....."Thank you kindly for Scot 22. You will remember that it was some time
ago when you sent it; the usual annual post-Christmas coma having descended on me
it is a sign of rare hustling on my part that you get any answer at all before
Shrove Tuesday. What I chiefly do at this season of the year, apart from keen-
ing over my chilblains, is sit amid the mess of unanswered fanzines totally
unable to make the decision: which to answer first. If you think of a sort of
human squirrel halfway through the hibernating period, scrabbling about in the
nuts, and not quite capable of eating any of them - that is I "
{ I do not see where the Japanese psychology comes into it when Japan was suing
for peace terms at the time the Bomb was dropped}

Donald A. Wollheim,* "Varlay would enjoy a look at the new litter-bins they have New York + planted all up and down Fifth Avenue. They took away the ***** servicable recognizable cans and replaced them by things that look like a gold-plated Martian robot, standing on one leg with his mouth open..On women, now there's a discussion that will never end. It's a curious thing: I've had occasion to hire a lot of girls at Ace Books to do proofreading and copy-editing. They're always college-educated and intelligent. None have ever read s-f or popular literature of any sort (paperback male-slanted anyway) yet after working a while, they invariably like and enjoy s-f, and prefer it over any other type of standard popular fiction in our categories(Western, detective, romance, historical novels etc) They prefer it, they ask for it. Yet never would have read the stuff if it had not been part of their job. Paid to do it, they find it superior to other types!...."But fanzines are not sent to pros any more. In the old days they always were; and that's another difference between Then and Now. Then, fans were a tiny embattled and very self-defensive group clinging close to the two or three magazines for comfort and support!... "The odd thing about the Shaggy letter was that shortly after it appeared there was an item in the New York Times which again admitted the known fact that Japan was already asking peace terms through Stockholm at the time Truman (who knew this) decided to drop the Bomb. Actually the Bomb was not intended to end World War II (which was practically over), but was intended to launch the Cold War and intimidate Russia. It did that...intimidated them enough to make them produce their own and the present nasty mess for the world's future." ((And I have a newspaper cutting here which says that of the population of Nagasaki 87,866 people were still affected by radiation, and "the fear and shame of radiation sickness has driven many to suicide".))

Jill Adams? + "The most interesting thing is, of course, Bill Donahoes 54,Cobden Ave.‡ letter about Women. I'm with Elinor, this 'I don't like Southampton + women' is strictly for birds, and those who say they don't ***** understand mundane type women are just not trying. They are being as narrow-minded as those they can't understand. Since I've been here my main contact with fandom has been via fanzines, writing etc. All the talking has been with nonfannish females. It's been no terrible effort, it hasn't been any mental torture, yet I don't think I'm any the less fannish for it. There are some women who I don't always track with, but there are some of the fones who I feel the same about. Whether I like or dislike someone depends on them, not their sex or whether they are fans. You can't claim you don't like something till you've tried it. I have never knowingly played dumb when in male company, I think a lot of it is unconsciously done. The only times I have knowingly done it is when I have been dumb! Just had a discussion with John on the subject and ended up with - wonder just what people mean when they talk about a 'fannish fan' mind? Got to try to define what I mean, and came rapidly unstuck. I know a number of people I'd define as 'fannish' but aren't fans. On the other hand there are some fans who I don't think are fannish. Could you define what you mean by the term?" ((That's a tall order! I should say the basic thing that they share, fannish people I mean, is the same sense of humour, not in every detail perhaps, but on the whole what will make one 'fannish' person laugh, will make them all laugh.))

Letters 3

+++++

Ken Cheslin, + "Gee, I don't mind a review being a mite late..a review.is a
18,New Farm Rd,+ review...is a review..like...this talk about women not liking
Stourbridge + women, and how they sort of go all cloddish in male company
Wilts. + hmm, highly interesting. My two bits worth favours the idea

+++++ of conditioning..like all that jazz about not using 'bad
language' or telling blue jokes when women are around..really only a device
for boosting the male ego. Everyone who isn't a clot, knows that women aren't
the tender delicate creatures convention says they are, why there are some
ladies, like the telephonists I heard, who'd make most men grow pale and wan,
language terrible, subject matter of conversations..well..I've seldom heard
the like..in fact never, even amongst what could be called the more animal
types of males. Ah well you know, Ethel, however much a man(in the interests
of science I'll include me amongst them..gee, notice the slimy way I inferred
that I'm not really like all the others?) however much a man may laud emancip-
ation of women, and say he likes an intelligent one, it's still awful deflat-
ing to meet up with a femme who is every bit as intelligent as yourself,
particularly when conditioning nags that women are really inferior beings," I'm
not at all sure what I am talking about" (In fact the number of men who can
put up with such a situation, are few and far between)

+++++

Juanita & Buck Coulson, + "...I think Varlay has not only an intriguing idea for
Route 3, + rubbish bins, but a workable one. Of course his model
Wabash.Indiana + might be a bit expensive, but you know, "if you want

+++++ the very best" and all that sort of thing. It might
be a bit too garish for you British, but I think it would be quite a hit over
here.I think Juanita will have more to say on the Donahoe contribution, but
let me get in a couple of comments. You ask "how many men really like a woman
who is as smart as they are?" Well, bigod I do! Maybe I'm unique, but I
doubt it. As for liking women who point out vigorously when they think I'm
wrong--well I like Gem Carr. Do I need any other references? I suppose if you
come right down to it I don't really believe that any woman--or any other man,
for that matter--is quite as smart as I am(I may know it intellectually but I
don't feel it emotionally if you follow me), but I waited a good long time to
find somebody who could at least talk my language. And I don't recall ever
having resented the fact that Juanita occasionally has to patiently explain to
me an intellectual discussion that is over my head." Buck

"Hi-Juanita here to add some comments, since I seem to have stimulated Bill to
some..on this women liking women business..I was going to put some of this
stuff in FAPA, but this is as good a place as any.I don't dislike women at all
in fact,I'm extremely feministic. I get very incensed over unfair labor pract-
ises which give a wman a smaller salary for performing the same amount of work
as a man, simply because she is a woman..this is particularly true in the field
of teaching in America, For instance, the head of the English dept. at my old
alma mater dropped dead from a heart attack, which left the position of head
open. Several professors were qualified, and undoubtedly the finest candidate
was a woman, in her late forties, astute,intelligent,an absolute paragon of
organizational ability: I mean she was a born department head. The position
was given to a very nice little man who is a whiz at etymology and an absolute
scatterbrain who couldn't find a chair with both hands if he was sitting on it.

Letters 4

To me this demonstrates both prejudice against women and beauracratc stupidity To repeat, I don't dislike or hate women, I simply find most of them shallow bores. But then I find a lot of men shallow bores too. I've been a housewife for four years, supposedly one of the most intellectually stagnating jobs in existance. Yet I have recently been attending graduate classes where in I am the only female not employed in supposedly mentally-stimulating careers such teaching, research, social work or the like; and inevitably I find myself if not head of the class, then easily in the upper 5%. I don't think these women are incapable of learning, they simply don't care; they don't consider their jobs stimulating, but simply jobs, money making chores. It's appalling really. I suppose I would presently be a spinster were it not for the fact that I met a man intelligent and mature enough to accept me without the necessity of making me crawl mentally" Juanita. ((It would be rather hard on the human race though, if all the intelligent women stayed spinsters until these conditions were fulfilled.))

Thanks go to the other letter writers also..to Roy Tackett who says that "Walt's item recalls to my mind my own younger days which probably better should remain forgotten. As I recall I wrote some rather horrible letters all filled with neoish stupidity and fanthusiasm. Or for real idiocy there were my letters to the prozines. Ugh! "

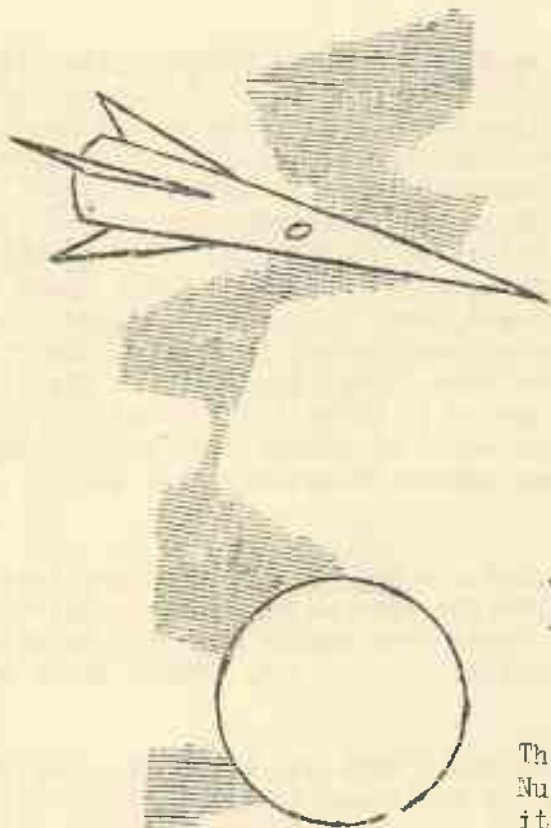
To Janey Johnson who says.." I especially got a kick out of the men and women versus women discussion. Do you know there isn't one single, I don't think, situation there that I fit into? Now, that's really saying something, but don't know how flattering it is! It did tickle me though and I can see where the comments on all sides make sense, in certain situations that is "

To Redd Boggs who says.."It seemed odd to me that you would fold up Fez right after acquiring a new duplicator, and I'm still puzzled, even though Haverings 2 has since arrived. I keep asking all the fannes I know, "Is it normal behaviour to quit publihing as soon as you obtain a new duper, if you're a female?" And they give me a straight look, like in "The Waste Land", but never ask me in to dinner to get the beauty of it hot. Why is this? Indeed I have just about used up all the sources of information available to me on this problem in female behaviour except you yourself. Maybe you will tell me: did you feel nice and rational (or as rational as usual) when you abandoned Fez to its fate, right after obtaining that new duper? Or did you feel your head whirling and popping with all sorts of emotions as you did the terrible deed?" ((Not to be coy..I'll tell you..I got this new duper see, and I thought now I'll have me a fanzine that doesn't have all those womanish women, I'll have me a fanzine full of red-blooded men like that Redd Boggs..and I gottim))

To Donald Franson who says.."I don't know why I received it, except maybe I'm a CRY fan, and also apparently a friend of the SFCoL" ((and also you point out misspellings in the nicest way I've ever read))

To Arthur Thomson who says.."Here are the Scot stencils, I hope you like them" ((To be absolutely honest, I think they were drawn by fandom's best artist))

Ethel,



NATTERINGS

There is a weekly magazine called 'The Nursing Mirror'. Today, when I picked it up, I read an article in which the author decided that a fair wage for a Ward Sister would start at £1,000 a year.

I suppose this will come some day, as the nursing shortage in this country becomes more acute.

When I started nursing just before the war, there was a history of massive unemployment behind us all, and people were still glad to have a job and fearful of losing it. I went first to a small fever hospital in Forfar, run by the County Council. There I was paid the sum of £1.16s.8d..... per month. Uniform and board were provided. The hospital served the whole county of Angus with the exception of Dundee which required a hospital to itself. As Angus is a very rural district we were never as busy as the Dundee hospital. I was born in Dundee but most of the nurses were local farmer's daughters.

I went first to the Scarlet Fever Ward which usually held 30 or so children. The work was not particularly hard, but the hours were very long. We had two hours off each day either in the afternoon or morning. One week we had one evening off at 5pm and the other week one off at 7pm. Normally we started duty at 7.30am and finished at 9pm. I enjoyed it, for I liked working with children, their ward is usually the most cheerful in any hospital. Some of course became very ill, but as I remember it, we had few deaths.

I have vague memories of isolated incidents from those days, long afternoons when the sun was always shining outside, helping a child with his crossword puzzle. I do remember cleaning the ward, it took hours! The floor was of grained wood and it was polished to a

Natterings 2

a high degree. Periodically we all got down on our hands and knees and scraped this polish off with steel wool. Then we started to polish it up all over again. We used a big heavy polisher, called a 'dummy'. It was too heavy for me to lift, but I soon learnt the knack of swinging it, by using my body's weight to propit it backwards and forwards. This was almost hypnotic in effect swing forward, swing back, till you felt your head nodding drowsily in time.

I vividly recall one small child, Peter, who apart from having Scarlet Fever had also sustained a bad scalding burn of his arm. Each day his dressing was peeled off and a fresh one applied. Now of course, he would be left in peace. If I close my eyes I can still hear his scream as Sister approached with the dressing tray.

I cannot remember this Sister's name alas, but from her I first learnt how to look authoritative. It would be our tea break, and we would all be sitting having this in the ward kitchen. From the ward would come the hum of the children's voices, growing louder in our absence. Just as it got loud enough for them to be getting a little outrageous, Sister would get up, give her apron a shake, and march down the short corridor to the ward. She would slap her feet down hard on the tiled surface, and by the time she reached the ward door—silence! She never had to spank a child, or be unkind, she just bent a look and the naughtiest child was quelled. She would come back to the kitchen and giggle. She did say once, it is alright to look angry, as long as you never feel it. One keeps a child in check, the other frightens him into submission.

Sometimes we had only one case of a particular disease and then they would have to be 'specialled' for you could not have a nurse going from one infectious disease to another. Matron had an ingenious scheme to supply this demand, and yet not 'waste' nursing staff. She would put two nurses on the case and they would share "twelve to twelve duty". One nurse would work from 12 midday till 12 midnight, and then the other would relieve her and work from 12 midnight till 12 midday. Both had their disadvantages, though it was only luck which one you were assigned. The 12 midday to 12 midnight was not too hard and you got plenty sleep. However you never had an evening off free in which to go out. The other shift meant you had evenings free, but it was much harder work and you felt more tired.

One case I nursed in this way was a baby with Erysipelas, a skin condition. Apart from being covered with this disease, the baby was also emaciated, having been badly cared for. I was on duty with this child for weeks, he was kept in long after the skin condition had cleared up, as the surgeon was determined to get him strong and healthy before sending him home to further neglect. How wonderful it was to see that baby fatten up till he was almost like a prize pumpkin, instead of weak wails, he gave forth hearty chuckles. On warm sunny days I was allowed to haul his cot outside, I can't remember being bored. I was probably daydreaming.

Forfar is a country town, very typically Scottish, with it's grey stone houses, and surrounding hills. It had a main street, still cobblestoned the last time I passed through and not much else. One cinema, one Saturday dance, and that was all. The hospital stood on the outskirts of the town in quite large grounds. The buildings were in blocks, this Scarlet Fever, that Diphtheria, and further

down was an odd block waiting for whatever came in. The gayest time it ever had was when the nearby Air Force station was stricken with measles. This rather comic disease (though it can have very uncomical effects) was a matter of chargin to them all at first. The officers and men were struck down together, but it seemed they could not be nursed together. Naturally the staff preferred the men, the officers were difficult and complaining patients, and would not obey the rules. They were forever slipping out of the grounds and taking their measles for a stroll round Forfarshire.

Away down at the bottom of the grounds was a dismal-looking block known as The Smallpox. It had been nearly six years since they last had a case there before I arrived, and I still have not seen one. I heard all about it though. The staff once they entered there were not allowed to leave till the last case had gone, or died. Food was carried down the path till you came to a gate, and left there after a large bell was rung. It was still kept vacant, and had become a home for all the things - and they were many - that Matron could not bear to throw out. Every now and then she would descend upon the wards and command so many nurses to "come down and do The Smallpox". It was a cry I dreaded. All those musty rooms, with bed frames, old boxes, brushes with all the hair gone, chairs and tables almost mouldered away, and clouds of dust everywhere. We had to take off the dust covers, sweep and dust and clean, and leave all as it was. How I longed for a good bonfire to get rid of the lot!

A little before I had arrived, there had been built a new nurses home, it was rather a magnificent affair, which being two-storied, rather dwarfed the rest of the place. We each had a separate bedroom (almost unheard of at this time for juniors) with a built-in wardrobe and dressing table. Of course, there was a rule that you could not have anything except a clock on top of the dressing table, but still that was another common rule at that time.

The Matron was small and round, and not very brilliant, I'm afraid. She had her Fever certificate but was not 'general' trained. She was fussy and full of quaint ideas. What I most clearly recall was the night she came into the ward where I was on night duty and told me breathlessly that there were "cows in the ground". I went out and looked but no cows were to be seen. Frankly I did not believe her, and thought that her habit of taking a large teaspoonful of Liquorice Powder every night had finally 'got her'. She used to trot in every night to receive this. You had to mix it with water for her, and listen to a lecture on how it kept her healthy and be urged to do the same. "no cows there Matron" says I. "I saw them" she declared and begged me to do something. I peered out into the blackness, and felt that if there were any cows there, I had no mind to meddle with them. So I offered to fetch the porter up. He, poor soul had gone to bed, but up he had to get, and armed with torches off he and Matron went. They found a whole herd of cows grazing round The Smallpox, and soon the police arrived, and then the farmer, highly irate at whoever had left open his field gate. I don't think Matron ever forgave me for being so unbelieving. She used to tell me that I was stubborn.

To be continued.

I hope as many of you as possible will attend the Con this year. It is being held in the New County Hotel, Gloucester. I have seen it and think it is the nicest looking one we have had so far. The hall is just fine for our needs. By the time this comes out you will all know that Kingsley Amis has agreed to be our Guest Of Honour. His book of sf criticism has just been published in this country..New Maps Of Hell. Why not read it and then come along and argue with him? I am sure you will want to do this!

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Dikini for TAFF

(the only man in fandom who duplicates his Valentines)

