

THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

SPACE DIVERSIONS

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

THE LONDON CONVENTION 1953....	The editors.....	92
EDITORIAL	The editors.....	102

FEATURES

FANZINE REVIEWS.....	John Roles.....	2 and 99
SCIENCE-FICTION PERSONALITIES.....	Bryan Berry.....	15
SCIENCE-FICTION PERSONALITIES.....	Jon J. Deegan.....	60
HERE and THERE.....	David Gardner.....	67
LOCAL AFFAIRS.....	Stanley Nuttall.....	23103
LETTERS and QUOTES.....	Norman Shorrock.....	105

ARTICLES

DON'T SHOOT THE WRITER.....	E.R. James.....	3
AQUAHOMO CANALIS (DLANOD).....	Anon.....	18
PRO and CON.....	E.C. Tubb.....	29
TODOLOGY.....	M. Ashworth.....	34
SCIENCE TIT-BITS.....	Lewis Conway.....	72
THE SHAVER SAGA	G.S. Davies.....	77
SHAVER STORIES CHECK LIST.....	David Gardner.....	85

FICTION

ROUND ROBIN (PART SEVEN).....	Erdad van Grids.....	6
THE QUEERS.....	Ivor Grudge.....	32
TWO CAME BACK (13,000 words)	David S. Gardner.....	37
THE IMMORTAL SAUCER.....	Paul Enever.....	70
FROM THE FRONT OF BEYOND.....	John Roles.....	74

REVIEWS

IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE (Film).....	J.D.R.....	22
THE MAZE (Book).....	J.D.R.....	33
THE MAN WHO SOLD THE MOON.....	D.S.G.....	64
SHADOW ON THE HEARTH.....	D.S.G.....	104

POETRY

A TEAR FOR A ROCKETEER.....	Paul Enever.....	97
STRANGE THIRST.....	John Roles.....	97

BALLOT

THE TRANSATLANTIC FUND.....		98
THE TRANSATLANTIC FUND BALLOT FORM.....		loose

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GURING & GIMBLING

OR, THROUGH THE WABE WITH John Roles

POST WAR. (10pp. F'cap), crept in from A. Vince Clarke undated, so I am not sure how old it is. This is a letterzine purely and simply(?) and includes Paul Enever, Roger Dard, (every time I read his Austre-ports, I feel like weeping as the poor down-underlings' lot), John Gutteridge, the N.Irelanders, Pete Campbell, John Brunner; and a belated Mancon report by Paul Sowerby. I hope we see more of this.

Three issues were received together of SPACE TIMES. Feb.V.2. No.2. (12pp. 4tp.) Ed. Eric Bentcliffe puts forward an idea for a competition: to try to prophesy successfully any event of this current year for a ten day period. Quite an interesting idea - why not try it? In the limelight this month is H.P. Sanderson - "Sandy", whose ghod is Hic (Pardon me). Ken Slater herein castigates the Lunatic Fringe, with Ray Bradbury deservedly getting a hard kick for his two hundred dollar testimonial to the Republican Party. Frank Simpson writes on S-F book collecting, and Sandy on S-F history, under the heading of 'Outline', to be concluded next month. This part takes some close ups of a few of the early authors, Kepler, Poe and Verne in particular. The last page ends up with an ad. for a fanzine to be called 'ASTRONEER'. This issue had a very nicely drawn cover, incidentally, drawn by Alan Hunter and executed by Hectography in three colours - beautifully registered. These printers have certainly mastered this medium all right.

To SPACE TIMES. March V.2. No.3. The cover for this number had not the compelling power of February's as it was a more relaxed composition of a humorous nature by Terry Jeeves. Internal duping improved over the previous issue's. Sandy in his 'Outline' briefs us on van Vogt, Wells and Campbell and gives us his opinion on current trends, which is the same as that of many of us, "too many magazines being published thus giving a better chance for poor quality stories". Eric waxes vitriolic on R.L. Farnsworth's (S-F is unreal) editorial in 'Rockets': rightly enough. "Saltego trans Miljaroj" by Jean Forge is a funny (peculiar) tale which for some reason was translated by George Rowlands. It ends: 'Finis'. Fitting. Gemtones Carr reviewed "Road to Bali" at unnecessary length I thought, considering the minutia of fantasy content of the film; but she brought to notice a Swedish fantasy "Road To Heaven", which you should not miss, if you ever chance upon it. Brian Varley has a share of print this time with a system of classification of Fantypes. He also comes on to the Spot for dissection. And on to

SPACE TIMES. April. V.2. No.4. (Whole number 10, 12 pp. 4to.) Two and a half colour cover this time (- the green is a mere wraith on my copy) by Joe Bowman. Registration is still tops - but quelle damage! there's nothing worth registering. Ego Spot - Hurrah! - alights on

DON'T SHOOT THE WRITER.....

He's doing his best, and --

You'll serve yourself and him much better if, instead of saying WHAT A ROTTEN EFFORT! you try to tell him where he has gone wrong from your point of view.

It takes a keen and knowledgeable mind to criticise constructively and with proper humility, for --

Criticism is a favourite occupation of mankind (and womankind.) But it is a two edged sword. If we say a story, a piece of music or even a meal dished up by an unfamiliar cook is no good, then we are expressing a relationship, not a truth. We are saying that we cannot digest the meal, the music or the story that has been prepared and, although it may be the fault of the author, the musician or the cook, it may also be merely a statement of our own limitations.

Eating fried snails, listening to symphony music, and reading Science-fiction are all acquired tastes. Even reading is not a natural ability (such as eating, seeing, sleeping, etc.) For we had to learn first single letters, then words and finally abstract ideas which were behind those collections of words. So you see that reading, especially in respect to a single branch of reading, i.e. S-F., is almost -- though not quite -- as much a skill as writing the words to read.

Now this conception is, in itself, an idea. An idea (this is culled from a newly-published book called LIVING TIME by Maurice Nicoll) is something which has the power of altering our standpoint and changing our sense of things. Reading is such a widespread ability these days that we take it too much for granted. In reality it is a skill. How do you know that all people read the same meaning into a piece of writing as was intended to be read into it -- or as you, if you are the writer, thought at the time of writing?

All this boils down to the fact that, while not "writing down to the public" you must have some idea how people will react to what you write. Many a rose is born to blush unseen because people are too busy to make the effort to climb the formidable walls of distractions and inertia between them and it.

A writer must know how to convey his ideas without demanding too much mental effort from people who already have as much as they can do to follow their businesses, watch TV, go to the pictures, keep up with the Joneses, go to night school --

D'you see? In other words we come back to the old saying about the greatest art being to conceal art...

Consider the idea I have been trying to put over to you. Now, every good S-F. story has a central idea or intention to hold it together. How will this notion (of skill being needed to understand a piece of writing) fit into an S-F. story? It sounds like

by
E. R. JAMES

something to demonstrate differences between alien cultures -- alien civilisations. Yes, it has been done before -- but it will be done again, and if you do it well enough, perhaps you will be one of those to earn something (or should it be (1) earn--learn something by the fact of doing it.)

You have, at any rate, the idea. Now you need a plot to express that idea. But what is a plot? It is basically a device to hold the interest of the reader -- or so we must assume as I cannot think of a better description. Without a scheme of incidents to tickle the fancy of the reader, he or she will desert you and go off to the TV, the pictures or tennis, cricket or football, or just to sleep. The plot, then, is the broad expression of the central idea which you have had.

But the plot will have no meaning unless you have characters to act out the drama of their lives. These characters, to be real, must have had a past (at least in the writer's mind) and they must also all of them be doing something, going somewhere into the future as they are carried by the time-stream of the imaginary world of your narrative.

And these characters, too, will never be plausible if you do not make them a part of the plot by interweaving their lives against a solid background. Each must have a reason for being where he is -- and this is not so easy, except in children's stories where reasons are not perhaps so important as excitements. For, while there is undoubtedly a thrill in being the first man on Everest, you will note that no one has proposed it to be a joy to live either there, or on Mars -- conditions on the latter being not too unlike those on the former. Brrr! Ask Mr. E.C. Tubb --

All right. Idea, (or theme if you prefer); plot, (scheme to hold interest); characters, (human foibles please); background, (scientific data should be correct or at least plausible.) Yes, a conscientious writer has quite a job. He must do alone what a dozen or more experts do to make a good film. His hobbies, interests, ordinary day-to-day living and his library must be extensive enough-- see the list of F.G. Rayer's activities in the No.6 S.D. and marvel! -- to provide everything from Giant Brains (Tomorrow Sometimes Comes) to Heavenly Toys (Nebula No.2).

Indeed, many authors of fictitious stories of the past (e.g. A.Conan Doyle.) often used to give a bibliography from which they had obtained their background data. Nowadays it is not fashionable to say you have studied particular books by such and such astronomers, that you have taken your ideas from this or that philosophical treatise, or that you have moved the Roman Empire into the future and tailored it to fit in its altered place, and chosen a plot out of this morning's Daily Blah. But the chances are your writer has (perhaps by some unconscious process) done all of those things.

Only a tyro or a fool would refuse to admit the truth of this (even if he only does so to himself.)

In S.D.No.6 Mr. Stan Nuttall runs down van Vogt and praises him in the same sentence. I have never met anyone who'll admit van Vogt is perfect, but they put him at the top of the Author's poll. In other words, he knows his stuff and his stories will stand up to any kind of analysis on the above lines... as well as being pleasantly written.

Pleasantly written...Yes, that's another thing. I quite forgot to mention that I think experiments in grammar and story-skeleton are out of place in S-F. They distract from the expression of the Idea.

The Idea is, in fact, all important in this story form. Everything else has a place but, in short stories at any rate, there just isn't room for extraneous matter. Every word, in the ideal story, should have some effect on the plausibility of the plot and ultimately on the expression of the Idea. This, however, does not mean there is no room for individuality in the writing. Eric Frank Russell has a wonderful style which, though always marching on with the plot, is often a pure joy to read for its own sake. In a P.B. recently bought called "Space on my Hands," the author quite frankly states in the intro. that he wrote for the "beautiful lolly" -- as a certain popular comedian so delicately puts it. As, however, the stories therein all had the S.F. Ideas I am looking for, the fact they were written in an almost comic style did not spoil them for me. I enjoyed the change from the usual grimness of more serious writers. Not that you have to be grim to be serious. Our respected Arthur C. Clarke always seems to me to be almost "jolly" as well as being extremely serious and often quite wise.

Eh? What's that? You thought this article was going to be about some S-F. personality(?) named E.R. James. Well... So it is. ((Mr. James has since written an article that will appear under our SCIENCE FICTION PERSONALITY banner in the next issue of Space Diversions.DSG)) It expresses, by inference, that...

Perhaps you would care to work it out for yourselves; instead of having me insulting your intelligence by spoonfeeding you. Probably you have already formed your opinion.

You have? Well, I hope that S.D.'s Stan Nuttall is right. And that we have grown "less intolerant"...

And that--

By Ghu! (Acknowledgments to Frank Milnes.)

S-F. will march forward just a little more quickly towards a wider public because fen see what writers are up against in trying to catch the imagination of a high proportion of the reading public... and try to help said writers to write better stories.

Instead of merely condemning them and their editors.

Yes. By Ghu! You too.

That's enough.

E.R. JAMES.

Round Robin Part Seven

(CONCLUSION)

BY

ERDAD VAN GRIDS

HOLY HELL, thought Bunny to himself, as the twenty foot Tregor led them into yet another passageway. More of the darn things, I wonder why they had to make this place like a maze, my legs are killing me!

Still taking one stride to Roxanne's and Bunny's four, Tregor quickened his pace until the other two were running as fast as they could to keep up with him.

"To hell with this," Bunny whispered to Roxanne, and, clasping her hand; "I don't intend to become a world champion sprinter just for this colosuss! Shut your eyes and hold on tight."

They were in a straight stretch of the warren for a change. Bunny stopped running and waited until Tregor branched off again. Using his telepathic powers he read Tregor's mind and familiarised himself with the ground just before the branch passage through the giant's eyes.

He took another look at Roxanne, noticed her eyes were tightly closed as he had instructed, and resisted the temptation of taking advantage of the situation. It might have been like taking candy from a kid but Bunny knew that she could pack a wallop behind that smooth, white frame - he ought to - he'd worn it long enough! Reluctantly he turned his attention to the matter at hand and concentrated....

They got half way to the spot he had picked out and then:blooey! He saw stars. True enough he hadn't been there before, and evidently teleportation didn't work by proxy.

Tregor came back and picked them both up. He grinned to himself as he carried them. Bunny had forgotten that he could read minds too, and on looking into Bunny's the whole affair had tickled his sense of humour. He was still grinning when he set them on their feet before Varno and went back to his machine.

Tregor was a giant, and if all his race were the same height then Varno was no Martian! He was an ordinary looking human of about five foot ten, middle aged, and with a kindly light shining from his faded blue eyes.

He was perched on a pile of cushions, toying with a ball of pure light, tossing it from hand to hand, moulding it into human form.

"Varno?" Roxanne queried.

He looked up at her with a smile. "Yes," he said simply. "I am



Varno. I knew a long time back that you were looking for me."

"Wait a minute," Bunny said, "how comes you knew that we were seeking you? The only ones that could possibly have known were Tregon, and we've only just seen him; the cat, if he read my mind, and I think he was too lazy to do that; and...and the Golden Light!"

The shimmering figure which Varno had been shaping burned up with a brilliant flare of golden heat, which did not seem to affect him, though Bunny and Roxanne backed away - their bodies blistered. Varno released the figurette and watched it float towards the roof of the cavern. It touched with a sound like the distant chiming of a million sleigh bells. The ball of light burst assunder shedding countless golden globes through the upper reaches of the cave, and slowly they floated downwards, eddying towards the form of Varno, arms outstretched. As they neared him the globes coalesced and the one ball of blazing light darted like a homing pigeon for his hand, settling there and sinking into the hard flesh of his palm.

"Well," said Bunny, after what seemed like a respectful pause, "just who are you and why were we told to search for you?"

"At one time," Varno slowly replied, "men of your world called me Gabriel - the Archangel Gabriel. But I have gone by many different names on many different worlds and on this one, as you know, I am called Varno."

"Holy Saint!" Bunny gasped.

"Not exactly," Gabriel replied.

Roxanne who had been unusually silent for a woman whilst all this was going on, kicked Bunny on the shins. "If he's Gabriel, then I'm a cross-eyed hag."

She was...for a second; and then Varno or Gabriel took pity on her and gave her back her curves and youth.

2.

Sometime later, the three of them, Varno cum Gabriel, Bunny and the late hag - Roxanne, were seated at a nearly empty table. Bunny, always the perfect gentleman, looked round for a serviette; found none, and wiped his lips with the back of his hand - a hand which was by no means clean. "Tell me," he said to Gabriel, "why look like this?" He pointed to the ordinary frame with the middle-aged spread.

"That's simple," was the reply. "I grow tired of always appearing as a god-like being, it makes a bit of a change once in a while to look like everyone else. Everyone but the Martians that is, they're freaks."

"Why are you here? Haven't they got religion?" asked Roxanne.

"Lord Bless you, yes. I'm on vacation here, don't you think I deserve a holiday once in a while? I get weary of playing the same old calls on my trumpet. There can be no variation on the theme when I'm on the job. Here, I can get a bit of peace and practise some hot licks on the old cornet. Hot Lips Gabriel, that's me when I'm off duty," he said proudly. "You should see these Martian hep-cats jump to my jive at the Saturday night hops. Brother and sister, that's something worth seeing!"

"Mind you, I don't play all the time, not even when I'm with the rest of the Heavenly Host. I have another job - a far more important one as far as the Boss is concerned."

"Can you call that other work the Galactic Task?" Bunny and Roxanne asked in unison.

"I suppose so."

"Well for heaven's sake what is it?"

"Trying to beat the Devil on his own ground," was the uninformative reply.

"What do you mean, 'on his own ground'?" Bunny demanded.

Gabriel drew a deep breath. "Well, it's like this," he said.

"Everyone everywhere has a bit of the devil in them, and as he is split into so many trillions upon billions of millions of pieces, the poor Devil can't do his work properly. Do you know, the Universal Furnaces are forever going out, or at least cooling off, because he can't supervise the workers? And when that happens it means we have to post some of the Heavenly Host to the lower regions to lend a hand. As they have unions up above too, and the leaders are forever threatening to bring the angels out on strike, I have the task of putting the Devil together again."

"Humptydumptyish," murmured Roxanne.

"As you said," affirmed Gabriel wearily, "hopless." You can see it's a never ending task. No sooner do I collect part of him together than somebody, somewhere in the universe has a child and I have to start all over again, for the Devil has to be a part of everyone, and everyone has to be a bit of a devil, otherwise there would be no work for any of us up above. Looking back on some of the things that you two have done, you'll see what I mean!"

Both Bunny and Roxanne had the grace to blush.

"Yes, I see what you mean," Roxanne said lamely. "But how does all that talk help us? I mean, why did we have to search for you?"

"Well, the time it took you to find me kept you out of our hair for a while. It gave us a breather and a chance to get those index cards into a modern filing system; so that no more mistakes will occur even if we do have to occasionally employ drunken office workers like Paddy and his lupine helper."

"Then we can go back to the Astral Reception office now that we have found you?"

"I suppose so, Bunny. I've had no instructions to say that you can't. But have you cleaned up your record sheets in this extra time that has been allowed you?"

"No, I guess not," Bunny admitted. "It's hard to become what you were never cut out to be, and I certainly wasn't meant to be a saint! Nor Roxanne! We are just human beings with all the weaknesses and failings that make up our lives and enjoyment. I mean, if I was a saint, Roxanne wouldn't be able to excite me as she does. No! I'm glad that I haven't cleaned up my record sheet."

"Me too," said Roxanne defiantly. "He may not be much to look at, but he has something about him that I like. To hell with being a goody-goody, I want to taste life."

3.

To Hell it was. Through the nothing and neverness they plunged, like a modern neckline, headfirst into the outskirts of Hell. Passed the Reception Office without as much as a 'howdiedo', turned about and landed seats first on the hot rocks. There they sat, looking at each other with woebegone expressions on their faces.

"He took you literally," choked Bunny, spluttering out a sulphur smoke ring. "What the hell did you have to mention Hell for?"

Roxanne said nothing. Her flimsy clothes were starting to smolder in the heat, but strangely enough her body didn't feel at all warm. She beat at the charring material with both hands, and then gave it up as a bad job. The next thing Bunny knew was that she was stripped and standing in front of him in nothing more than her birthday suit.

A bit of the devil in me, thought Bunny. That was an understatement! I'm a big bunch of devil, or I could be.

He noticed that his own clothes had started to char and that he was now quite warm - but it wasn't with the heat rising from the rocks.. Oh dear no! It was Roxanne.

Although she had worn his body for a long time, maybe because she had worn his body for a long time, Roxanne moved back as he advanced on her with that certain look in his eyes.

"Oh no you don't! Not here, Brother!"

"Watcha standin' round for? Get to wurk you devils."

"Eh?" Bunny stood still and looked at the red gentleman who had stepped out of the ground and who didn't seem able to make up his mind whether to be a bull or a man.

The newcomer scratched the base of one of his horns, showering bone particles and dandruff over his shoulders. "Umm," he said, "new arrivals. Didn't the office tell you where you are and what shifts you're on when you booked in?"

"No palsy," from Roxanne. "We didn't have time to stop and find out anything at the speed we were moving.

"You must be bad then," the devil's helper said sagely. "Only the real baduns cum through without havin' to book in. That means you're both for Sector HZ32, HELL S3. Get along with you. Follow the arrers and don't take up any more of my time with idle chatter. I've enough to do without you bothering me."

Too astounded to protest, Bunny and Roxanne looked up at the indicator board that the apparition had pointed out, noted the arrow that pointed out the way to Sector HZ32, HELL S3, and started off.

"Hey you! The one with the curves!"

They both turned round and went back. Roxanne because she had the curves, and Bunny because he had had them.

"No, not you Skinny," pointing at Bunny. "The other one, the dame."

He looked at Roxanne, licking his lips. Even devils get that urge now and then when confronted with the female form divine. "You can't go with Skinny. You go through the next door. See, it says 'BITCHES' in big letters!"

"But..." Bunny started to protest. He got no further. A pointed tail whipped round and menaced his stomach. He turned round and it menaced the opposite side, a bit lower down. Without any more prompting he set off. The barbed tip looked a bit too sharp to argue with.

'ROTTERS', the sign over his door proclaimed. He walked through.

Suddenly the ground opened up beneath his feet and he found himself sliding down a polished slope. Down he went, passing weird and wonderful machines with rods sticking out in all directions. Down, down, down, until he landed with a bump at the base of the largest machine of all. Before he had time to pick himself up two foremen had landed on him and were pummeling his bruised and battered body.

"Bunny, me ould pal, it's me, Paddy. Begorra! I never expected ye to come and visit yer ould pals, eh Loupy?"

"Actually," said the wolf, "nor did I. Really old man, it is most frightfully friendly of you and all that. I do hope we are going to have the pleasure of your company for a long time to come. We feel as though you are one of us, having had something to do with you before. You know, Paddy, the exboss is most thoughtful and considerate at times, maybe he is going to take us back."

"Maybe so. Maybe no," said Paddy in a couldn't care less voice. Then he whispered to Bunny so that Loupy could not overhear. "Me bhoy, ye wouldn't happen to have a bottle on ye, a bottle of Ould Oirish, me homeland brew?"

Sadly he shook his head, noticing for the first time that Bunny didn't have a stitch of clothing on him, and certainly no bottle.

"Sure now, and it's a fine state of affairs it is," he said, clapping his wings together. "Here's me and me ould pal Loupy dying on our feet for a spot of something to warm our innards, and ye forget to bring some with ye. Shame on ye, Bunny ye ould rascal. Never a drap has passed our lips since we were banished to this godforsaken hole, and I bet ye have been soused every day out there."

Bunny managed to get a word in at last. "Get off me you crazy pair of loons," he shouted. "What do you think I am, a bed or something?"

"Frightfully sorry and all that old chappy." Loupy removed one of his paws from Bunny's ear and stepped aside, pulling Paddy clear with his canines. "Didn't realise that you were still underneath."

"Now, tell us what you did to be sent along to our sun?"

"What do you mean, Sun?"

"Tut, tut. Fancy not knowing that. Well, old pal, Hell isn't just one place, it is divided into countless millions of spots throughout the Universe. Hell is in fact, the collective name for all the suns in creation. You, at the moment, are in the centre of what you call Sol, in your own Solar system. This is the worst one of the lot."

"All those machines you passed on your way down here are connected to atomic piles. That is the way that the sun keeps on throwing out heat and radiation. Every now and then we remove a certain pattern of dampers and stir up the surface somewhat so that it gives off radiant heat and energy. Then, when that lot of energy has been lost in space and on the planets, we pull out some more dampers and start off the whole process again. So there you have it. Now, why were you sent here?"

"I don't know," Bunny scowled. "One moment I was talking to Gabriel on Mars and the next moment Roxanne had mentioned the word hell...and here we are," he finished weakly.

"Begorra, Loupy, and he has had a drink! Here he is talking about we, and there's only one of him that I can see!"

"Of course it was we, Roxanne is a woman. You gave me her body by mistake when you sent me back to Earth, and she had mine. We met up and went to Mars together. There the Martians swaped us back into our own bodies again and we met Gabriel, the Archangel. When we arrived here, a devil with a pointed tail saw us, sent me here and Roxanne off to the women's section. Now do you understand?"

"Of course we do old pal, we aren't morons are we Paddy? At least, I'm not - I went to Oxford in my better days."

"Faith, and I went to the village school outside ould ould Dublin," contributed Paddy, "so I'm edgeamated too."

"I don't care where you went, or where you're going; but what does concern me is can you get Roxanne and myself back to the Astral Reception Centre?"

"Provided the Devil doesn't hear about it, old chappy, but you'll have to do something for us in exchange."

"Well?"

"Drop a good word for us with the exboss, we never see a bottle of anything to drink down here, not even water."

"Done," said Bunny. "Now get to work! Both of us mind, both Roxanne and me!"

4

He landed with a gentle bump on a cloud layer and found Roxanne nestled beside him.

The voices that thundered and boomed, the voices that whispered: THE VOICE, said, "So you are back at last."

"Yes, sir," said Bunny humbly, "we're back. And please, sir, we want to be born again. We're tired of all this shifting about, not knowing what is going to happen next. So if you could manage it, we would be most grateful."

"I'm sure you would," The Voice thundered. "But there is one small point."

"Yes, sir?"

"You haven't mended your ways and your copy books are still blotted."

"I know. Try as we will we can't change. As your agent, Gabriel, said: we've got a bit of the devil in us through no fault of our own. And we don't want to live a life of milk and honey if it means that we've got to be saints. We don't want to go about doing nothing wrong ...and ...and things like that. We're human and you made us like this in the first place."

"I suppose I did at that, I suppose I did." The Voice sounded resigned. "We all make mistakes sometime or other, even your creator."

"Well, Bunny, and you too Roxanne, I'll leave you as you are. As you say, life wouldn't be worth living if you were perfect in every way. And I suppose you're not too bad really."

"Thank you," said Roxanne simply. "Thank you."

"There is just one more point, sir."

"What is it?"

Bunny drew a deep breath. "It's about Paddy and Loupy..."

"Enough — don't mention their names in my hearing again. I've stood all I can stand from those two. Let the Celestial Furnace Master have his fill of them for a change! Now begone!"

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir." Bunny realised that he was talking to nothing — The Voice and its owner had gone.

5.

They awoke in a field, cradled in each other's arms, and miraculously; they were clothed. Bunny raised himself on one elbow and looked at Roxanne. She really filled that dress to perfection. She smiled back at him.

"Now what?" she wanted to know.



He could have told her there and then, but somehow the suggestion that was in his mind would not leave his lips.

Roxanne wriggled one shoulder, and the dress slipped a little.

Bunny reached out with one hand and pushed it back into position.

"No, dear," he whispered, and noticed that she looked relieved.

"I know they told us on the way out again that we have been chosen to bring human life to this world; making it like Earth, and to do that we must have children. But somehow, something is missing. I want you more than I have wanted any other woman, but not this way. Something in me won't let me. I know it's silly of me to talk about sin, but that's how it strikes me. I don't want to fall and be sent to one of the suns when my life is finished here. And it isn't because I let Paddy and Loupy down and don't want the chance of facing them again. It's something more than that. Something which seems to be a part of me. Something that says you should be my wife in name as well as deed. But we'll find no preacher here and... Do you know how the marriage service goes?"

Roxanne shook her head. "I know what you mean," she said softly. "I feel the same, but there are only two of us and I do love you."

They stood up, hand in hand, and looked at their new Earth, ripe with plants and small animals, but only two humans, a man and a woman. Bunny opened his mouth, trying to recall the all important lines to mind.

A booming voice rang out through the stillness. It caressed them, booming but gentle.

"So you thought you hadn't changed your ways my children? You see how mistaken you were? There may still be some of the devil in you but you should make the grade. You now start with clean record sheets - both of you. And for your thoughts, Bunny, and peace of mind, Paddy and his friend Loupy and now reinstated." It paused for an instant, then: "IN THE NAME OF THE LORD I PRONOUNCE YOU MAN AND WIFE."

Faintly, through their joy, they heard two other voices, soft and faint.

"Thanks me bhoy. Begorra, ye'r one after me own heart. Good luck to ye and y'rs."

Then Loupy: "Actually, Paddy, old pal, you took the very words out of my mouth. Good luck to both of you - and you will find a drink waiting for you when your days are over down there. Just look us up when you reach the Pearly Gates. Peter knows us and will direct you to us. Good luck once more, and then you for your thoughts."

6

They were alone and yet not alone. They had something more than Adam and Eve ever had. They had something to comfort them when things looked dark. BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART, FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD!

And there were two good if careless friends up there too, just waiting for them when things grew dark for the last time.

THE END
 OF
THE ROUND
 ROBIN.

Science Fiction Personalities

IT WAS THROUGH an inherent love of fantasy that I came to science-fiction; came to know it, to appreciate it and finally, much more recently, to start writing it.

But fantasy came first and, I must admit, still does come first with me. When at school I was far more interested in Zulu witch-doctors, Tibethan Lamas, Red Indian Medicine Men and the like than I was in the men whose names I had to learn because they were more belligerent and had larger armies than their neighbours.

From then onwards I read fantasy and science-fiction regularly, though by no means exclusively, but it was not until early 1950, when I finished my period in the forces, that I discovered just how much the field had developed. This discovery, in turn, led to the thought that I might start trying to write the stuff myself. And the purchase of an antique three-bank typewriter and some paper made me convert these later thoughts into actions. Thus, unfortunately, I more or less "missed" true fandom altogether, my contact with it (in my case the London Circle and the White Horse) coming after I had started writing sf and, too, after I'd started selling it. From solitary reading of odd magazines and books and without very much of the normal discussion of such literature with other fans, I tumbled myself, willy-nilly, into the weird and dubious-sounding category of "professional".

It is difficult for anyone who writes for a living to describe the sort of stories he likes to read and likes to write because there is generally someone who will throw his words back in his face at some later date when he produces a tale that does not come up to his own recorded standards. However, let no one say I was afraid to put my head upon the chopping block! I think all stories that have any pretence at being more than very light entertainment should hit the reader both intellectually and emotionally. By "intellectually" I don't mean that they have to have some incomprehensibly complicated philosophical, technical or sociological problem attached to them; I merely mean that they should make the reader think about the tale, automatically, as he reads it. He shouldn't have to go through it three or four times to find out what it was all about. If a story does necessitate re-reading then, to my mind at least, it fails as a story despite the fact that it may be putting over sound and intelligent ideas, since such ideas can generally be found in non-fiction works which

BRYAN BERRY

are, on the whole, written by people with a far sounder knowledge of whatever the subject happens to be.

Again, when I mentioned "emotionally" I didn't mean that the tale had to be overloaded with heart-throbbs and rising and falling bosoms. I meant that it should make you feel what was happening to the characters. Reader-identification comes in here, and, with it, characterization. All the best stories, in any field, contain characters you can really get inside and understand, and that, I feel, is where so many sf tales fall down badly. Too much space is taken up with elaborate explanations of various futuristic gadgets and not enough with the feelings of the protagonists of the story.

However, perhaps my complaints are a bit out-dated. It seems that nowadays a fair number of the better magazines are concentrating more upon tales concerned with emotion and feeling than on those devoted to mere gadgetry. This, however, is a comparatively recent development and one that is, I trust, indicative of the course sf will take in the future. Certainly it is the course I want my own stories to take, since I am happiest when writing the emotional type of yarn and unhappiest when struggling with complex gadgets and vast, detailed descriptions of space warfare. But then, as any writer will admit, circumstance frequently prevents one from writing what one wants to write.

But it is this emotional type tale that will eventually, I hope, get me somewhere as a writer. And by "getting somewhere" I don't just mean continuing to earn a living by writing; I mean getting somewhere. Almost anyone who has some journalistic ability and is either well-versed in a specific subject (or group of subjects) or who has an agile mind and can use encyclopaedias and reference books intelligently can, given time, become a writer. Of this I feel certain, and that certainty does not stem merely from arbitrary and hastily-formed opinion, but from the period I spent in commercial journalism, prior to becoming free-lance, and on the studies I have made of the various "You-too-Can-be-an-Author" and "How-to-Write" type of books, advertisements and courses. But genuine creative writing is something different. Very different. This belief comes mainly from talking to writers who, though in many cases unpublished and unknown (chiefly because their work is not sufficiently commercial to sell, and not because it isn't good), have tried to install in me the idea that the creation of a story should mean something to its creator as well as to its readers. I do not, of course, mean that a writer should intend to stay unknown and unpublished. Writing, at its best, is an art form and, as such, should be communicable to all and sundry. Those who say airily: "Oh, I never submit my stuff to magazines," are doing just as great a disservice to literature as are those who, generally for financial reasons, refuse to use their writing ability on any plot that they think may be rejected.

The first sf stories I read were those in the early war-time issues of ASTOUNDING. Similarly my introduction to modern fantasy came through the companion magazine, UNKNOWN. I was then about eleven and would, I recall, spend as much of my spare time as possible grubbing about in second-hand bookshops for tattered copies of these two magazines on which I cut my teeth, so to speak, in the worlds of modern fantasy and science-fiction.

Stories that impressed me most (and which still impress me) included Heinlein's "Universe" and "Common Sense", Ted Sturgeon's magnificent "It", Fritz Leiber's Fafhrd and Grey Mouser tales, Williamsons wonderful yarn "Darker Than You Think", some of van Vogt's tales that have since been collected in "The Space Beagle" and whose actual titles I forget, and so on. Later I discovered Lovecraft, Howard, Simak's "City" tales (my favourite sf series), Russell's "Sinister Barrier" (another favourite), Bradbury, del Ray, etc.

Yet despite the vast increase in the amount of sf being published I still doubt whether the majority of published stories in this field are as good as the majority of those in the field of pure fantasy. However, that is just a personal opinion touched, I suspect, with personal prejudice. For I cannot deny that I still prefer a spook to a spaceman and a banshee to a blaster. Consequently I am more than pleased by the sight of the one or two new fantasy magazines that have appeared in the States. When will some enterprising British publisher produce something of similar nature over here? We could certainly do with it.

So far as my private interests go, I collect books, write and read poetry for relaxation; do quite a bit of painting and drawing (mostly in a fantastic vein, though I once worked as a comic-strip artist); like taking long walks; prefer cats to dogs; am anti - all forms of bureaucracy and all forms of class, racial and religious prejudice; dislike mercenary-minded people. Outside of the sf and fantasy field I like reading Steinbeck, Walt Whitman, Oscar Wilde, Graham Greene, Raymond Chandler, Jean Paul Sartre, Eric Ambler and J.K. Huysmans, among others.

Finally, regarding aims and ambitions, mine are no different from those of innumerable other embryo authors who have so far managed to avoid that state of all-embracing cynicism that is, in this materialistic age, misnamed "maturity" or "adulthood". Namely, I want to reach the point where I write what I please and am pleased with what I write, and where what I write sells - and pleases its readers.

BRYAN BERRY.

*** IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF SPACE DIVERSIONS, 'SCIENCE-FICTION PERSONALTIES' DEPARTMENT WILL FEATURE E.R. JAMES

WANTED; Nos. 1&2 of 'Fanscient' and any after No. 12.
ASF Aug '36, MARVEL Aug.& Dec.'39. NEW WORLDS No.2
SHE (Haggard), comic book

FOR SALE or EXCHANGE, 'Fanscient' Nos. 4,5 &6.

John Roles
26 Pine Grove
Waterloo
Liverpool 22.

INTRODUCTION

IT IS common knowledge that the new biological survey vessel, ZOON, will be handed over to the Exploratory Dept. of the Admiralty within the next week or so. Together with her sister ship, BOTANE, she will replace the illfated PANDORA lost in the disaster of the 3rd May, 2080.

As public interest has been aroused by the completion of the ZOON, and will no doubt be maintained in the weeks to come by many references to her in the popular videozines, we at the Department for Extraterrestrial Survey feel that some further information on the discoveries of her predecessor would not come amiss. It is to this end that the present series of articles have been prepared.

PORT NINE LUNA,
QUARANTINE DIV., EXTRATERRAPLORATION DEPT.,
PROF., YAKCAM DLANOD., E.E.X.S., P.H.B.

SUBJ., AQUAHOMO CANALIS(DLANOD),
INF., VOYAGE 8. "PANDORA".

AQUAHOMO CANALIS (DLANOD)

I MUST MAKE it clear from the outset of this article that A.Canalis will be accorded the dignity of human status, and will be referred to throughout as a person. I am well aware that this will clash with the beliefs of certain religious organizations, and that my words will be attacked by them. I am also aware that my words will greatly appeal to the publishers of the more infantile Daily Videos, and that they will be as strong for my defense as the others are against me. My reason for making this point is neither to gain the plaudits of the one nor the recriminations of the other. I simply state what I believe to be facts, and offer for my defense the passage quoted below from the First Chapter of H.S. NUTTALL'S recently published book, 'OUT OF THIS WORLD'. And later on an extract from W.HARRISON'S report to the Society: 'ON AQUAHOMO CANALIS'.

Nuttall has it that, "No man who has stood as I have stood and watched these people at work and play, can offer a reasonable doubt to the evidence of his eyes that here by some strange chance is an extension of our own species."

The words of a man of Mr.Nuttall's standing weigh heavily against the vapourings of those people whose arguments seem to be based upon the belief that they alone are ordained to wear what they are pleased to call the "Maker's Shape", and that the appearance of that shape upon other creatures, however closely related to themselves, is little short of tangible blasphemy. It is tragic

that such beliefs exist in this enlightened age, though so long as they do we must find patience to guide them, and to explain their error.

Physically, the Martians are our superiors; the aquatic existence has developed their forms far beyond the muscular attainments of an Earthling. Over countless generations they have become adapted to their environment in a way that is only surpassed by the Terran seals and whales. Their faces still bear a strong resemblance to degraded Humanoid types, though their eyebrows have receded drawing the nostrils higher onto the head. This brings eyes, nose and ears onto the same plane, thus enabling the Martians to perform the functions of breathing and observing without exposing more of the head than is necessary.

The chest is greater in proportion to the Martians' size than is our own, allowing them to submerge for considerable periods of time. The legs are long and strong, the toes fully webbed and admirably adapted for swimming. Perhaps the most interesting feature of these people are their hands, for here can be seen evolution working under the strain of dual stimuli. These are needed to provide strong digging implements and, at the same time, to fashion them for an aquatic life.

However, my narrative is running away with itself. To explain the need for digging implements and to explain how obvious land-dwelling creatures were forced to become aquatic we must know a little of the Martians' history.

(The information that follows is, as far as can be checked, correct. It was supplied by William Harrison, the sole surviving member of the wreck of the Terra Nova I. He dwelt with a Martian group for close on fifteen years, learnt to speak their tongue fluently, and committed to memory the facts that follow. The prodigious feats of learning and instruction that he undertook on behalf of his Martian friends have earned him the veneration of the entire Western Group Federation. And a garden-pool has recently been set aside as a monument to his memory.)

His slightly melodramatic turn of speech is herein faithfully reproduced. The parenthesis is his own.

These people had reached a social level that corresponded to our mediaeval state in Europe when the water began to go, or, to be more exact, when the disappearance of the waters reached a notable point. Year after year the staggering drought and the continual failure of crops brought a global famine in its train that nothing could check. (I place all this about sixty thousand years ago).

The little rain that came was carefully stored... To be guilty of wasting it was death. Each cloud became a Major God watched by every living creature waiting for the rain that might be loosed above them. Each wind that came from the arid cancer of the desert hinterlands was alternately a friend or foe as the creatures watched the shifting cloud. It was this state of affairs, producing a lawless scrambling for the life-giving fluid that culminated in the terrible Water Wars.... No struggle known on Earth ever reached the stupendous scale of these titanic battles... Whole nations were annihilated... The taking of prisoners was unknown, their need for water doomed them. In something under ten years ³/₄ of the globe's population perished. (Little did Terrankind know their wisdom when they named this planet MARS.) The wars, hysterical as

were, saved the remainder of the species. Each Group, suspicious of its neighbour, withdrew more and more from all forms of social intercourse...Each jealously watching its own supply of water, until finally forced by circumstances to actually live in the liquid as the eroding winds from the great deserts tore down the flimsy houses that they built.

This isolation gave personal characteristics an opportunity to develop within the Groups. These in time became dominant features to the entire tribe. Thus, nationalistic distinction that had died in the last years of the wars as each man turned on his neighbour was resurrected within the family group (in some instances the differences have produced what might almost be classed as separate genera).

Having taken to the water, the Martians seem to have severed all contact with the land and in a remarkably short time (some ten or so generations) they were completely at home in their new environment.

They dug into the soft clay banks to make homes and turned the water paths to their own convenience. (During this time their hands assumed the mole like digging shape and were only partly webbed). At about this time occurred the last great upheaval in the lives of this harried people...The crust of the drying planet began to crack, forming the titanic chasms that we call the Canals. The species virtually ceased to exist as into the great fissures roared the cataracts from sea and river, sweeping away and drowning thousands of the Martians, and for most of those who escaped placing the water far beyond the reach of their legs, that though strong enough for swimming no longer held the balance necessary for an overland march. Even so, in a manner no less perverse than that supplied by the Water Wars, this new cataclysm was responsible for the continuance of the species. It formed the finest means of water conservation that could be devised. By the opening of the great cracks the water was drained from the comparatively shallow seas that allowed a great amount of moisture to be lost through evaporation, and confined in deep, narrow channels that made for slower evaporation and by the same confinement did away with the constant threat of storm. And so the people lived.

They are by no means dull...And are without a doubt the answer to the vexing question of submarine cartography that has troubled so many back on Earth...With help they can earn their way in a Confederation with Earth, and will regain the status of a virile and progressive race.

The potted history given above will help to a greater realization of the Martian people and must surely help dispel the doubts of those people who try to differentiate between Animals with the attributes of Human beings, and what I sometimes believe are Human beings with the attributes of Animals.

The illustration to this text is a reconstruction of one of three found in that portion of the "Pandora" that was located drifting near Deimos. It shows two adult males in typical observation poses. The plants shown (*Carambedis Longiteuthis*) are of great interest. They represent a species that has made a unique attempt at survival. They also show how every plant and animal warred against each other. The radiating stems bear hundreds of diaphanous threads that secrete a virulent poison. It is death for



any other plant to come within the radius of these threads, this includes plants of the same species, though in a way that science is as yet unable to explain.

To conclude I will mention a few interesting facts about Martian speech. With the divergence of appearance that came with isolation and subsequent inbreeding, came a dialectic change that finally produced different languages. Pet words and endearments unintelligible to others became standard words as each generation drifted deeper into the limitations of isolation, until, as has been said, differences so manifest arose as to give the impression that the groups represented different genera.

Throughout these many changes certain things reflecting the tribulations of the times grew into a strange uniformity - a terrifying uniformity to any one with imagination enough to realise the stress of circumstances that brought it about.

The under-mentioned facts have been found true of 92 different Martian dialects known. The word 'Cloud' is synonymous with 'God', the word 'Stranger' with 'Monster', and the word 'Water' with 'Life'.

T O E E C O N T I N U E D

Film Review.

IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE

3-D, uncoloured. Reputedly written by Bradbury, but according to information from some fan quarters, his part in the authorship of the film was negligible - some few minutes - for better or for worse, depending on whether you like the Ray way of writing or not. However, I'm sure all who see this film will be favourably impressed by it. The story, as far as SF fans are concerned, isn't.

The usual idea of a visit from alien beings in a spaceship (NOT a flying saucer this time) and a hero who sees it crash, then observes signs of life in it before it gets buried in an avalanche, trying persistently without success to persuade people he is not subject to hallucinations, and the subsequent I-told-you-so scenes, is of course merely a prologue to SF as we know it. But it is a thoroughly enjoyable film withal. The weirdness of some of the sets, the dramatic tension and the sight of an alien coming slowly into view from the utterly black frame of a deserted mine entrance are really quite horrifying edge-of-the-seat scenes.

The film is A Cert., and I cannot understand why on earth it was not made an X, for it is certainly much more scarifying than 'War of the Worlds' and 'The Thing', the Campbell version of which, 'ICFOS' resembles in one respect: that in which the alien takes on quasi-human guise.

SEE THIS.

LOCAL AFFAIRS

STANLEY NUTTALL

SINCE the last issue of "Space Diversions" several events have taken place. The first was the meeting between the Liverpool and Manchester Groups on the 14th June. This was on the 'neutral' ground of Southport, the resort being easily accessible from both cities. Amongst those present from Liverpool were Norman Shorrock, Frank Milnes, John Roles, Jim Mooney, Bill Harrison, and myself; from Manchester, Eric Bentcliffe and Brian Varley. Apparently some others did come along but they got themselves lost. It is not known whether they ever returned to Manchester or not.

The rendezvous was the Scarisbrick Hotel. Shortly after 1 by the clock the party left the hotel and went for lunch. The weather up to this time was excellent, but news had evidently been spread of the presence in Southport of Mancunians (apologies to Eric) and, as we all know, they are not used to old Sol, having only read of it in S-F. Obliging, therefore, someone cluttered the sky with clouds just as we came out from lunch. Nothing loth, we ventured onto the boating lake in the high-powered speed-boats Southport is so proud of (2 knots or bust). Attempts were made at bumping one another, but boarding parties were out due to the presence of some Official keeping his eye out for anything of that nature. At 2 o'clock the Rains Came. And how! We repaired to shelter with the optimism of the English, thinking it may pass over. It didn't. We finished up in various amusement arcades trying our skills at various crooked devices, especially 'Hi Speed Hockey' in which Eric and Frank became Olympic champions in no time. John and Norman bought water pistols and fought a spirited duel along Lord Street. Later we repaired to the Scarisbrick for dinner and afterwards to the lounge. Our fellow Lancastrians left fairly early, and at ten o'clock we returned to Liverpool. Little business had been done (that I knew of) although Norman & Eric were seen whispering darkly (A Master Plan?), but we enjoyed ourselves despite the weather.

The second event was the moving of the Space Dive. Apparently the owners of the room in St. Vincent St., desired to use it for other purposes, presumably storing dead bodies, and we were given notice to quit.

We are now meeting in a private room at the 'STORK' Hotel, Queen's Square. Certainly the surroundings are much more congenial than our old ones. The first meeting there was on the 16th of Nov.

On June 1st, we were honoured by the presence of a gentleman from the Deep South (of the U.S.A., not Kensington), Jesse Floyd of Savannah (Gah!) and we spent a most enjoyable evening together. Jesse then suggested that we meet the next day for a Coronation session. Commencing at the Lisbon Grill (i.e. until closing time), we then adjourned to the Dive, taking with us ample

(concluded on page 28)

Francis Evans, a staunch fanne supporter of the Manchester Group. But what a brief sketch. Francis deserves more space than this! What happened, Editor, someone put the break on your typer? (We were very pleased to see her even if only for one day, at the Loncon; which shows how keen she is.)

//Aside: Talking of Conventions (who doesn't?), Eric Bentcliffe brought up the evergreen topic of Consites in his Editorial... After the recent London Fiascon, we feel like bringing it up too. We are now quite convinced that until the Old Brigade in the London Circle has died off, been pensioned off or choked off, London will never be capable of putting on a show worthy of future attendance by what H.J. Campbell refers to as the "Bloody Provincials". No Sir! We "B.P.s" had a very enjoyable Con up here in Manchester last Autumn. It went with real zing, and a freshness that was completely absent from the chaos presented as a programme by the Loncon Committee. They managed well enough without the presence of any hidebound member of the viscous London Circle of Tired Fans turned Quassi-Pro.//

Terry Jeeves reviews the film "Magnetic Monster" - one not to be missed. Jack Doggett reviews two old fantasy books in "Fantasy Archives" (a permanent feature?) A reprint from 'Gargoyle', a 1940 fanzine, by W.F. Temple, didn't click with me I'm afraid - Bill's humour, then, as now, is a shade too dry for my taste perhaps. There is an unnecessary bit of fiction by Brian Lewis; and Dales Diary from Stateside and Eric's Newscolumn completes the issue. Please, why have you stopped reviewing British Pocket Books? There's no shortage! Surely somebody reads 'em! CAMBER. Issue No.1. Ed. Fred Robinson of Cardiff. A general fanzine with fiction, pomes, articles, fanzine reviews etc. The duplicating would have been much improved if the sheets had been interleaved as there is much heavy offset. Four pages of poetry are nicely laid out with artistic borders. The poets (inevitably?) include Orma McCormick. Don MacKay was rather taken with "P.T.W."s "Epitaph in Autumn": "Something of 'L'Après Midi d'une Faune" was his remark. I quite liked it myself; also Orma's "We Are The Un-dead Ones". Some good film reviewing was done by Dennis Gifford; (is he the one who reviewed "Death Is A Numer" in the last Straight Up? It was great.) Hal Sapiro is the Stateside columnist apparently and contributes some rambling fan-chat of no particular import. A 'Mr.E.' has a short weird-fantasy on cats which was only very fair reading: Sandy of Manchester comes up with a very belated Manchester report: "Beyond the Visible" and "Born in Captivity", the two Hamilton hard cover books are reviewed at length by the Ed. and also Moskowitz's 'Immortal Storm', which is in Fred's opinion, too wordy. As far as I can gather this is a generally felt reaction to Sam's writings, of sterling worth though they are. A letter column (from Willis) and a very amusing fictitious one from Joe Everyfan, on his convalescence from fanitis end a good issue.

THE MEDWAY JOURNAL No.3. (24pp. 2f'cap.) At the time of writing I have not seen a copy of No.2, but it is far above No.1 for content, although the reproduction still leaves something to be desired. This may be due either to clogged or blunt typeface, or even typing onto ribbon, which is what the result really looks like. The contents as the Policy footnote on p.1 extrovertly announces, is

primarily local news and views, but these are endearingly narrated in "The Archives" in such a way as to impart a keen interest in the doings of the Medway Group. Tony's description of the film show is most amusing. Visions of trees being chopped up (instead of down) and other anomalous goings on, were conjured up with great delight. What fun seeing a film from End to Beginning. "The Demolished World", featuring Demolished Dinosaurs and Demolished Rivers flowing from mouth to source! The new style of film review, (at least new to me) is a change from the usual. Apart from the "Lost and Found Dep't", which rambled a bit too aimlessly for me, this is a nice chatty little zine. I reckon a suitable epithet for this would be 'Chumzine'.

A copy of a fanzine arrived this morning which I never expected to see again. (The fanzine that is, not the morning).

QUANDRY No.29. May or June or So, 1953. This fzn, I understood was now being disseminated amongst the Few of Fandom, hence my surprise at seeing it. However here it is before me - my bloody Quandry. Yes! It is! My copy is anyway. Is this a subversive method of dealing with rival faneds? In endeavouring to extricate the correct staples from the folded zine, I found myself hooked neatly onto a devilishly curved staple which, I now have no doubt, was impregnated with all manner of malevolent poisons from the turgid swamps of the alluvial south. When I finally managed with great suffering, to unhook myself, blood was flowing freely from the resultant wound, which I managed after several minutes to staunch with the covers of Q. I have not yet felt the ill-effects of this subtle and under-handed assault, but no doubt it will hit me suddellikeQuandrylikeQuandrylikeQuandrylikeQuandrylikeQuandrylikeQuandrylikeQuandry.

But I've got 'ere a thing named PERI. (No.1. Eds. Ken Potter and Dave Wood of Lancaster, 22pp 4to.) This official organ of the Junior Fanatics has been due to come out for well over a year now. Better late than never! (One point to their credit is that Norman and I both subbed at the 1952 Loncon and after all this time we have each received the first issue - not like Slant for instance; I subbed for / in Spring '52, received a copy of the then latest and was asked to please return it as it was the eds last copy. When/ finally did reappear in Spring '53, I never received one. Not that I felt any pangs about it;/ seems to be highly overrated, judging by the four or five issues I have seen, (lent by a well-meaning and kindly faned from Welling.))

The contents include a short analysis of Cartier by Quinn, a scoopette by Don Morgan on a Sf series appearing in the old mag "IMPOSSIBLE", Clothier on how he produces art for the prozines, AVClarke on pen-names in SF, Terry Jeeves and his Loncon 1952, Willis, Bowman and pieces of fiction by Tubb and Bob Shaw fill the pages in an interesting way.

PERI, No.2. After some frivolous editorial burbling there is a story by Author Bryan Berry, "The Exodus" which I rate no higher than low level fan fiction. (Probably a rejection from Andromeda'.) This is followed by some terryings from Jurble Beeves, and meanderings from Tete Pay - sorry - Pete Taylor. Dave Cohen documents the Junior Fanatics and reminisces on his own junior fanlife. A poem each by Joe Bowman and Alan Hunter. The issue is rounded off with a letter column including one from Bob Bloch and his usual pungent wafts of - ahem! shafts of wit. ((We learn that Peri has now closed but that the Junior Fanatics at the White Horse in London will carry on with a zine from down - or is it up? - there.))

Here folks I have two issues of a Good fanzine to review - viz: PENDULUM, whose September 1952 issue I am reviewing because it merits notice. This is V.1, No.3, 24pp, large 4to. Eds. Bill Venable and Don Susan. Production - neat, with margins justified and clear print with no offset at all; all leaves must have been slip-sheeted I think. With no TLMA and no Spaceship to review this issue Pendulum takes first prize in my humble opinion. An article "The Ridge" by Joe Gibson, is high grade fan material. I have often pondered on the problem of what our section of the galaxy looks like from another star. Now I know. Some painstaking research went into this, obviously. This is the stuff of great fanzines. Project Fanclub is a worthy cause, I'll admit, but 3 pages seemed an inordinate amount of space to devote to letters to it. From England, Derek Pickles reports British pro-publishing news and H.J. Campbell writes briefly on British prozine and book publishing history. Harlan Ellison records the story of "Magazine of Fantasy and S-F" including much bibliographical and other useful data. There is also a letter column.

PENDULUM. Vol.2. No.1. March 1953. This has a lithoed cover by Bergeron, of a cockatrice or some such weird ornithological BEM, strikes you anyway - scraperboard work I think. The first item to grace the contents page was a work of fiction, which I approached warily. However it turned out to be a rollicking burlesque on Space Opera, no stark tragedy in a nutshell or mind searing epic in miniature attempted here. (Now I realise what the creature on the cover is. It is an EXGAZABO, how stupid of me to have forgotten what an exgazbo looks like.) This tale is to be continued. Derek Pickles does some more reporting, briefer this time though.

Aside//I believe Derek has now packed in fandom. In a note to me before the Lonco, he told me that he would not be attending, as he didn't think it was worth the trouble and expense (How right he turned out to be), and that he had folded Phantasmagoria as he had got bored with the whole thing!

Joe Gibson follows up his last Astrogation article with another on how to find your way home from anywhere in the galaxy. "In the Limelight" this time, is Amazing Stories, New Style. - Harlan Ellison therein pours fire and brimstone on to the heads of Browne and Ziff D. My own view is that Browne is simply doing the job he is paid to do i.e. sell mags. Not that I approve of anything emanating from ZD at all, but objectively speaking, everything they touch turns to gold. This, like Fantastic, and Amazing's Shaver days, will line their pockets:- at the expense of fandom's goodwill and their esteem. Everyfan knows that fan buyers are the minority of a mag's circulation, and Browne's selling ideas are directed to the larger body of purchasers; that is, the directionless masses of grey-minded people whose inertia or thought needs something sensational, gawdy and bawdy to arouse its gaumless interest. They require shock treatment. Announced for future discussion is "Astounding S F". Despite many repetitious histories and so on, of prozines, publishing, fans and fanzines etc., this sort of thing is essential to fandom. This is the only way we can learn the story behind these logos, and the lore of SF. Carry on ye historians, ye biographers and filophiles, ye do a worthy job.

We learnt a few days ago that G.F.Clements editor of "The Magazine Collector" has folded his zine. No.5 was the last issue. R.I.P.

SCIENCE FICTION NEWS (Ed. G.B.Stone of Australia) Has 4 photolitho pp. into which is crammed a wide variety of news about new mags, books, from USA.UK.Italy,Holland, and there's a fmz review column and a column of lively quotations from various sources.

ETHERLINE No.1. Another newszine from Australia; pubbed by the Amateur Fantasy Publications of Australia. Format 2 F'cap dup.12pp.

THE SCIENCE FICTION FAN No.1. Ed. G.B.Stone (Again!) This 1/2 F'cap duplicated 'zine (24pp) consists of reprints from other fanzines.

But they are exceptionally well chosen: and the chances are that you have not read them all before (have I read that phrase before in a ZD 'zine?) Even the book reviews are reprints. The sole new item is "The Science Fiction Magazines - Astounding", by "G.B.S."

This covers the history of the mag's style.

ATLANTIS V.6. No.1. May '53. Includes the begining of a series on the Flood Myths; some angles on Hoerbigerism by Commander Nutter: a curious little article by E.Kiss postulating the possibility of a thick ice crust on the moon's surface: a proposed New System of Weights & Measures, and a shockingly muddy writing by P.Hoffman on Plato's Critias.

Amidst the frantic babblings of the average fanzine and the frequent odour of bobby socks, K.K.Smith's ACHRONIC CHRONICLES comes as a kind of tonic, with its quiet unassuming air, its breath of sanity and homely wisdom. (In case of doubt, there, I mean 'homely' in the English sense, as I believe American usage of the word has different connotations.) I must mention, however, that the method of reproduction of our cover for Volume Two is NOT, Sir, 'Linoleum Block' (as you mentioned in a previous issue), nor even is it 'offset', but a fullfledged line block and printed in the normal manner.

CONFUSION. Vol.2. No.2. Ed. Shelby Vick. 40 pp. of duplicated matter on varicoloured paper. Such evergreen subjects as 'Sex in S-F' and 'The Astounding SF Story' are discussed herein. Eleven pages are devoted to letters, three to a comic strip and three to what I thought was godawful poetry. But in a column entitled Beer and Buttermilk, written by Vernon McCain is something which demands urgent comment. This subject is brought up by McCain with reference to Willis's remark in a speech at Los Angeles when he "said" that British fandom has not been taken in by Dianetics. Only a couple took it up seriously and they were hangers on. He also added that the average British fan has leftish political views and thus views with disfavour such writers as H. Beam Piper and L. Ron Hubbard." (These are McCain's quotes - how exact they are I cannot say). Now firstly, I view with disfavour one Irishman's speaking for all British fandom: and Willis at that! My impressions of British fandom's reception of Dianetics has been - 'there's probably, or undoubtedly, something in it' with reservations regarding LRH's approach, presentations, etc. And as for the... average British fan's having leftish political views - how can we possibly know this? My findings are just the reverse. So much for Willis. As for McCain, he seems to me to be one of those reactionaries, who, now that LRH is in bad favour, on account of his Dianetics work, say that he has done no good writing at any time. To quote McCain once more '...it was generally agreed he was a very objectionable person...the articles and book on dianetics were as poorly written as Hubbard's fiction has always been'. It was those last eight words which inflamed me. If ever injustice was done to a man...Have the fans,(or McCain) forgotten 'Fear' and

'Slaves of Sleep', which came in the top ten in Space Diversion's recent poll. And what about 'Final Blackout', 'To The Stars', 'Death's Deputy' and Doc Methusaleh amongst many other unforgettables. Bah! McCain should join the tabloids he derides with such contumely. Reminds me of a copy of his fzn 'Review' which I came across some time ago. It aimed to review all the current prozines. Very worthy -- and well done up to a point, but his frequent extravagant panning of a magazine or story and infrequent, and always only faint praise was such as to make one rather dubious of his criticism. It gave me the impression that he could take a rest from SF for a few years and give his jaded palate a chance to recuperate from the monotonous, badly-written stories that appear in those poorly illustrated, badly bound, poorly edited, worthless, unreadable science-fiction magazines.

What a note to end on. However, today I have been inspecting a large bale of fan publications sent to me by Ken Slater, and my heart was warmed and uplifted to see a fair number of worthwhile projects. Amongst these are some beautiful productions. For example a 72 pp 'zine Masque, a masterpiece of clear Hectography; Space Trails; Stefantasy; D'Journal d'Art; Viewpoints; and many others of most pleasing appearance.

These have been sent to me as part of the new Operation Fantast project - that of the formation of a library of fanzines -- a "Science Fiction Fanzine Foundation." You will hear more of this anon via O.F., (if you are a member that is - if not you damned well ought to be, it's the biggest and BEST ORGANISED non-profit organisation in the world, but then so it should be, it's run by a genius. No, not me - the other one - Ken Slater.)

John Roles .

LOCAL AFFAIRS - Continued from page 23.

liquid food - this precaution was seen to be fully justified when we finally broke up at 3.30 A.M.

Surprisingly enough our other main activity had been discussing Science Fiction!

On June 8th a letter was read by John from the Kungl. Lantbrukshogskolans Bibliotek, Sweden, requesting info. on S.D. Who said we aren't international?

Water pistols are now accepted wear at the club (indeed it is foolish to come unarmed). Members are warned not to loan them to anyone on the pretext of "Let me see it, old man." They are certain to be shot. Pardon me while I change my shirt.

FILLER/ From a letter received from the LIVERPOOL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY: 'In 1888 we had 651 members and were thus able to print a 34 page illustrated monthly Journal and establish Branches in the Isle of Man, Australia and Pernambuco.'

All we can say is we hope that all the Branches possessed their own telescopes!

PRO E.E. JUBB and CON

CONVENTIONS!

They come, they go, and afterwards there is the inevitable post mortum. "Was it good? Bad? Indifferent? Should we have done this? That? Or maybe the other thing? Will we run another?" Etc.etc.etc. A monkey house has nothing on the screaming, raving, hair-pulling and breast-beating resulting from both running and weeping over Conventions both past and present. Not to even mention future.

If there is going to be a future.

Now, before the unfortunate committee responsible for the recent activities at the Bonnington Hotel are publicly flayed and branded, I intend getting in one opinion at least from the viewpoint of said committee. Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe everyone was so overwhelmed by the glittering sparkle and variety of the programme that a happy silence will settle over fandom, the silence of complete satisfaction and contentment.

Somehow though I doubt it.

I doubt it because of certain remarks wafted to my ears by seemingly irate visitors, and of all these remarks the one which really struck home was this;

"What do we do now?"

And there I think is where I come in.

Somehow a pre-conceived notion has taken hold of visiting fans, the notion that they are there merely to be entertained. I grant that they have a right to expect some sort of programme, but surely no sane person can really believe that a small committee can entertain more than a hundred people for two days without any outside help? Again the whole idea behind any convention seems to have either been overlooked or forgotten.

A convention is a gathering of people interested in the same thing or things.

Therefore; no convention can be 'run', all any committee can do is to organise a time, a place, and facilities for said people to meet and to circulate, to speak their piece and to meet others who also have something to say.

Now what happened?

A programme had been arranged, a programme which by sheer "Act of God", had to be altered at the last moment. No films could be shown, though films had been obtained, a deposit paid, and expenses incurred. The L.C.C. refused to licence a private showing of 35mm films, and we knew of that just three days before the convention was due to commence.

Plays had been organised, and some of them were really good ones, but people drop out, other people simply can't be bothered to

rehearse, and so it goes on. I'm not making excuses, I don't have to do that, after all two halls were booked, a private bar laid on, a programme laid out and table displays etc., obtained. What more could you ask?

I'll tell you.

Common interest from conventioners.

You!

Money prizes were offered for competitions, items incorporated in the programme which everyone possessed. A total of five competitions, a crossword, a caption for a cartoon, three puzzle pictures, you know the sort of thing.

We had three enteries for the crossword.

We had six enteries for the cartoon.

We had less than a handful of enteries for the puzzle pictures.

From over a hundred people that surely shows a keen and intelligent interest in any official programme. Maybe no one bothered to read it. I can hardly think of any other reason why fans should ignore CASH prizes.

And then of course there was the auction!

I wouldn't say much about that, but as the probability is high that plenty of other people will, perhaps we'd better take a look at it. Now I've helped conduct the auction for several years now, and people seem to think that I can do it well. I don't know about that, but from any point of view the auction this year was a horrible mess.

Please! Bids of one penny are not and have never been funny. It is even less funny when such a bid is the only one, and magazines are knocked down for a single copper coin. Literally, more stuff was given away this year than was actually paid for, and as most conventions depend on the auction to get them out of the red you can see where the trend is leading.

Not that an auction must have lashings of cash rolling in to make it a success, not at all, but a little interest, a little flow of comment, some sort of affinity between the unfortunate bloke on the stand and the people before him, can make all the difference.

This year it was noticable by its absence.

Which of course brings us back to the whining complaint; "What do we do now?"

Man! If you don't know how in Hell's name can you expect anyone to tell you?

Wear a funny hat, get drunk, sing a song, open that big mouth and talk to someone, smile, dance, crack a joke, kiss a woman - then fight her husband, roll dice, barrack from the audience, get up and speak your piece, complain - not to one friend but to the convention as a whole, join in. Join in. JOIN IN!

Simple.

Just remember what you're there for and - JOIN IN!

Walt Willis has stated, and now I know it for cold fact, that conventions are not necessarily a small group yapping for two days at a large group. Unless you are interested enough to meet others with the same interests, and to have paid your cash and journeyed to the hall you must be, then you are wasting your time and that of everyone else by not circulating and taking advantage of the opportunity.

Conventions are not just for the benefit of a small committee, their job ends when the time, the place, and certain essentials are organised. The rest MUST be up to you, to the person who comes to the convention. After all, it is your convention as much as anyone else's. The whole thing is put on for YOUR benefit, is it too much to expect that you will take just a little interest?

I don't think so.

In fact I'm so certain of it that I expect to meet you all again at the next convention.

So save your indignation until then, eh?



Dear FANED,

Do you sometimes feel like this? Have you asked him a thousand times to be original? You have! And no results, eh! Then here's what to do.

Tear his head off, then send it round to the taxidermists and hang the fruits of that worthy's efforts over your desk.

Like this →

You prefer him that way?

Good! What's that? You still haven't got a cover good enough for your 'zine?

Friend, your worries are over! Just drop a line to STAN NUTTALL, 3, MELWOOD DRIVE, LIVERPOOL, 12, asking him for details of 'THE NEW S.D. COVER SERVICE'. He'll be glad to let you know prices, sizes, etc. Black and white drawings; on Stencils; Scraper Board for Litho, etc.

Your 'zine deserves a properly designed cover. Only you are stopping it from having one. Write now!



((THIS IS AN OFFICIAL SPACE DIVERSION'S ADVERT -- Editors.))

THE QUEERS

BY IVOR GRUDGE

THEY'S ALMOST gotten me the week before, but they weren't going to get away with it. There aren't many who know about them, I do. I'm one of them - supposedly. One day there's nothing to worry your guts about and the very next day one of their hellish groups will be established. Sure, you get all sorts of groups springing up all over the damn place, but these aren't like the others. The guys that go to these aren't human, and God! don't I know it. You can't afford to leave them be, you've got to tackle them. But you can't get anybody to believe that they're a menace to society, and when you can't get people to believe you've got to act yourself.

Fifty yards to go. My cape swirled round my legs and I pulled it across my chest and fastened it. I didn't want it getting in the way when I went into action. I started sweating. What if my guns jammed up? What if they didn't work like I was counting on them to do? What if any one of a hundred things happened, what'd I do then? I didn't want to shoot them. I wanted to get closer than that. I wanted to get my hands on them. I wanted to rip them apart, to feel their flesh creep beneath my hands as I gouged and tore. I wanted to kick them and see their teeth crack and splinter under my toe. I wanted to hear them yell and scream when they got what was coming to them. I wanted all that but I couldn't have it. When it's one against a dozen you don't throw your chances away like that. You shoot and you shoot fast and you take damn good care that the lice don't get you, too.

I eased both guns out of their rubber shielding and checked their loads. They felt cool beneath my touch and yet my fingers burned and itched to curl round the triggers and spray Those who I knew were waiting for me. They were waiting. I had made the attempt to get up to their room on two previous occasions and twice they had driven me back and laughed when they saw me flee. Only this time it wasn't going to be like that. This time I had the edge on them and they didn't know it.

God, how the laugh was going to be on them!

There was nobody in the street outside. I ran towards the door and crouched behind it. My breath rasped in my throat and I fought to still it. I listened and heard nothing. I hugged the wall and sidled up the stairs. At the top of the flight I paused. I had a clear run of corridor before me and I had to cross it to reach the next flight. It was the quietness that disturbed me. I knew they were watching and waiting for me. If they had made a noise I wouldn't have cared. It was the stillness that got me. The stillness!

That was what they wanted me to do - crack up.

I waited on the corner and I drove them down by waiting. I heard them on the stairs, their heels clattering as they ran down to get at me. I let them bunch up in the corridor and then I stepped out from cover.

My lips drew back in a snarl. "Damn you," I shouted. "Damn you to hell and back!"

Review

THE MAZE by MAURICE SANDOZ. Illustrated by SALVADOR DALI.

Guilford Press, Priced at 8/6. Published 1953. 111 pages.
13 full page illustrations.

FROM THE inscription by Dali on his illustrations, this book was written in 1945 or before that, and apparently published in the U.S.A. as evidenced by the fact that the publisher's name, Doubleday Doran, drawn on the cover, remains even on the English edition. Why it has taken eight years to see publication here is rather odd.

It has crept into the market unobtrusively enough, though one or two small notices were given it in a few newspapers and journals, where it was classified as a Gothic.

To a reader versed in the mythos of Lovecraft, Derleth & Co., it will be very familiar stuff. In fact there is almost an exact parallel in HPL's story "The Moon Bog"; although the final explanation is not supernatural in the way Lovecraft would have it. In addition to this there is a flavour of Titus Groan, brought about by the similarity of the ancient castle background.

The general picture is that of a decaying Scottish (in lieu of New English) castle; dark, forbidding and surrounded by an aura of weird mystery. The lord of the manor, as in Lovecraft's stories, is apparently under some evil influence, which demands locked rooms, and strange customs for the servants and guests. Slimey green patches are found on the carpets, strange dishes are secretly prepared and smuggled to the Dweller in the Maze, the (to us familiar) voice of some 'not-man' in the grounds at night; these are all well known devices to the fantasy fan and from the very beginning the ultimate dénouement is quite obvious. But this need not obviate the enjoyment of an unusual, though not original story. The illustrations by Dali are very fitting, grotesque in their way and will appeal, though one of them unavoidably gives away completely anything that was not already guessed.

JDRoles.

THE QUEERS (Continued).

I was drenched with oil, and a couple of zap guns filled with ink seemed senselessly ineffective against such measures as they adopted. I dropped them and ran and I could hear their laughter in my ears. But I still had the laugh on them; they'd got the oil to clear off those steps before the landlady came back, and oil drips, and there's three flights of stairs up to the Space Dive.

It has often been said that there is nothing new under the sun, tho' something may appear new on the surface it is more often than not a safe bet to state that it has been done before. Therefore, like Mr. Ashworth, we make no claims that Todology is new. In its separate component parts it isn't new, but as a coordinated whole - as a field of Science it is new. Although we have not yet taken a course at the Ashworth Todological Institute, we are firmly convinced that his new therapy offers release from many of the cares and troubles which mar our lives. We do not believe in sensationalism, we do not herald it with a blowing of trumpets such as greeted the appearance of Dianetics, but we are certain that there can be no cases of failures in Todology. As Mr. Ashworth points out, in a Science such as this there is no place for failure. We believe that Mr. Ashworth is sincere in his hopes for the betterment of mankind, and it is with a feeling of humbleness that we present his article

(NLS & DSG)

TODOLOGY

The new science of inte grated personal adjustment.

by MAL ASHWORTH.

AT THE OUTSET THE NECESSITY MUST BE REALISED OF ADOPTING A completely Non-Aristotlian attitude towards any new concepts postulated in this article. The prime difficulty of any radically new science has been, not experimentation and collection of data, but rather clearing the ground (a less prudent person might indeed use 'dung-heap' alternatively here) of the public mind of the outworn concepts which cement the old and erroneous science in place. However, the task of removing outmoded beliefs from the reader's mind must be attempted before any exposition of the radically new and different science of Todology is undertaken.

Firstly, let me say that I chose the medium of sf fandom for the first presentation of this science for two main reasons. The first is that sf fandom by its very nature is perhaps the most open-minded section of the community extant today, and the second that I firmly believe that a large share of the suffering, of which I now hope to be able to rid the human species, predetermines sf fans becoming fans (Fan humorists, I understand, would aver that becoming a fan comes first and then the suffering, but I refuse to accept this). Perhaps this difficult idea needs a little more explanation. After having undergone a certain amount of suffering - that is, having got the worst of its contact with its environment -

a human organism must turn to something which will give it some hope for a betterment of its condition in the future. In the past, its tendency was to turn to religion, but in a more scientific and sceptical age, what more natural than it should turn to the ready made field of science fiction? This then is the answer to the fan philosophers' eternal question..."Why are fans?"

Now a word about this revolutionary science before attempting to clear the way for its acceptance by your intellect.

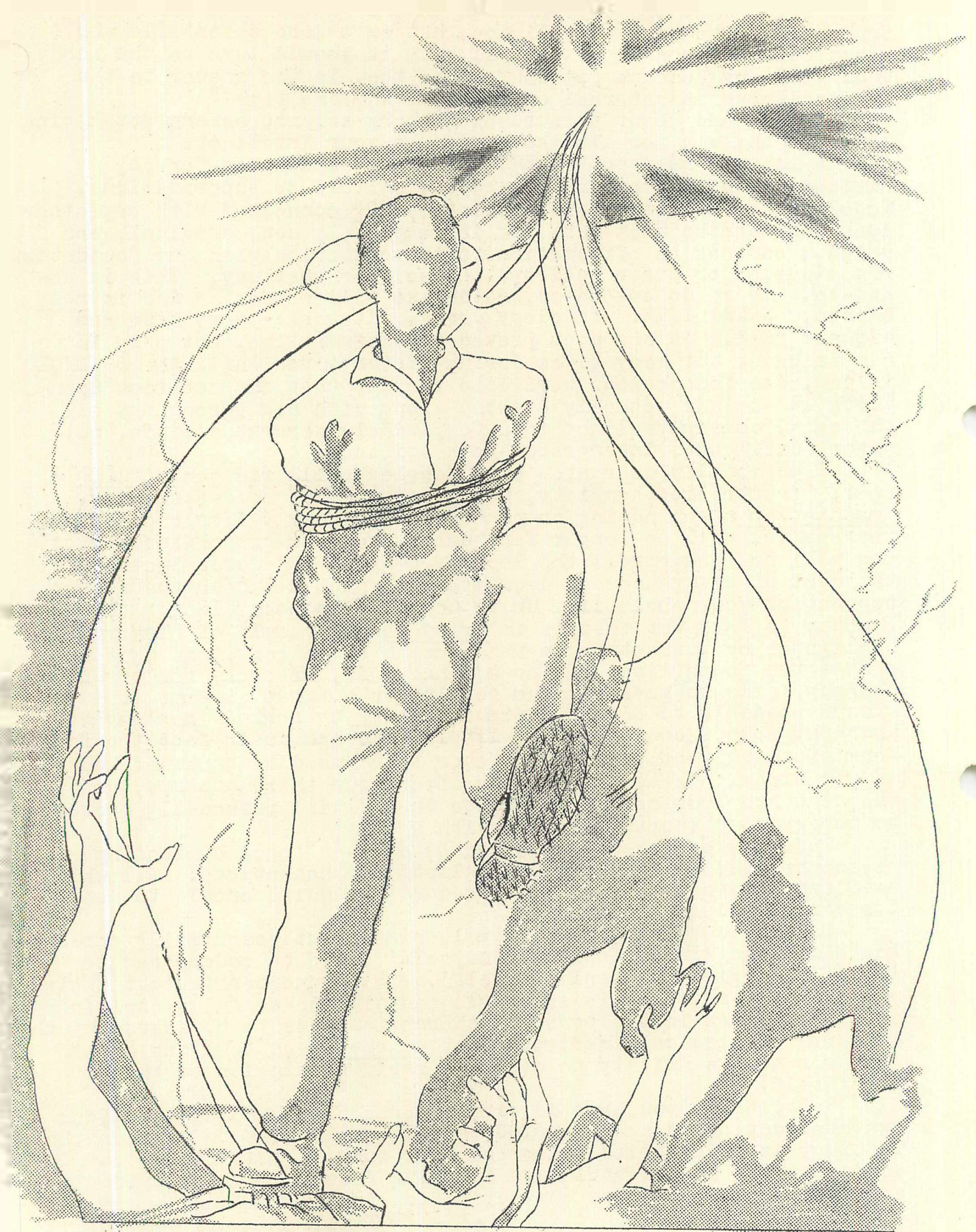
A science must work EVERY time. (My apologies for any similarity to any previous sciences, beliefs or superstitions. Todology is definitely and absolutely NOT connected with any other idea or doctrine whatever. It is completely new, original, and unique, and has no affiliation to or connection with any foundation, organisation or other society). A science must say, "This is so-and-so. If we do so-and-so, so-and-so will happen." And it must happen. EVERY TIME. Todology works. It works every time and without fail. It has been proved time after time, not only in recent cases but many times during history, for while the SCIENCE is new, its foundations were laid the day that man set foot upon Earth, and it has actually existed along with him throughout all the ages, coming to light in a few, widely separated minds, but never, until now, intergrated as a science.

I personally guarantee that Todology will rid you of ALL fear, frustration, anxiety, worry and lack of self-assurance. Immediately after having completed the extremely simple course of therapy you will no longer feel unable to face responsibility, you will no longer feel the lack of courage and determination, the want of assurance and decisiveness which has been the secret torment of your whole life up to now. It is possible for the therapy to fail but this is in every case a result of either negligence or misfortune in the process of therapy, and does not affect the foundations of the science. If, however, for any reason, therapy fails to give maximum results at a first attempt it is always possible to ensure maximum results by further periods of therapy. This consumes very little time and is in fact the fastest form of therapy of this nature ever to be used by mankind. However, if you experience any difficulty after your third attempt, contact the Ashworth Todologival Institute when I will personally endeavour to supervise a therapy session with you.

Todology has been recognised as a great force by leading psychiatrists, physicians, specialists and scientists. All who have encountered its infallible record are quite unable to deny its certainty and efficiency.

Todologic therapy is extremely simple but essentially personal. The old adage 'Physician heal theyself' could be modernised to 'Be a Todologist and heal theyself'. Everyone carries out their own therapy, but this is so simple and will be so fully explained and illustrated in the personal therapy courses to be issued by the Ashworth Todological Institute that no one need feel any doubt whatever of his ability to effect a rapid conclusion of therapy on himself.

Well, there you have in simple terms what Todology, by your own application, can do for YOU, and I should like to mention that Todology is being tried daily now, not only in this contry but in various parts of the world and is being found to work inevitably and infallibly. I have now put before you all the necessary



"JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME "

TWO - CAME BACK

By

David S. Gardner

THE WAR LASTED longer than most people had expected at the outbreak of hostilities. In all it lasted twenty-six years and a few comparatively short months; then the Rigel forces capitulated. At the time of surrender they held some forty thousand Terran prisoners on their system's sixth planet.

Johnny Lomax was one of those prisoners.

He had a family, and also a sweetheart who hadn't been as true to him as he had hoped. He had a future now that the war was ended. He also had a past. The past -- the immediate past, had been four years in a labour camp making robots and teaching androids. That ceased when the Rigel battle fleet withdrew from its positions and ended the twenty-six year deadlock by surrendering -- unconditionally.

Their fleet was as numerically strong as the Earth fleet. Neither home planetary system had been attacked, for the deadlock was out in deep space: but the ships stopped rolling off their assembly lines.

They surrendered and gave Johnny a future different from the present.

Before he even knew the war was over he was on a ship, one of a convoy of fifty, and heading out. Outwards from Rigel VI.

CHAPTER ONE.

"NAME?"

"Johnny Lomax." I was standing before a long narrow table facing two uniformed clerks. It was one of many tables and I was at the head of the queue. Over the heads of the two clerks was a placard with a large letter 'L' swinging gently in the breeze which came from the open doors. From outside the hall came the sound of the shuttle ships as they landed and disgorged their cargoes of released prisoners. I could picture them crowding down the ramps and taking their time as they marched over to the Admin building. They wanted to hurry and get the formalities over so they could get home, but Rigel VI isn't Earth and they wanted to refresh their memories just as I had.

One of the clerks asked a question which I didn't catch. He repeated it, "Which ship?"

"Maryland," I told him. "Torpedo layer."

He shuffled through a pile of papers until he found those he wanted. He passed them over to the other clerk together with some blank forms.

"Next," he called. "Name?"

"Luther. Matthew Luther."

There was an open glass door just to the rear of the desk. When I moved over to let Luther take his place at the front I could see my reflection staring back at me. At one time I had been told that I was handsome in a rugged sort of way. That didn't apply now. There was a dead-white fold of a scar on my right cheek that crept up towards my hairline. I hadn't had it when I signed on the Maryland. Wavy hair was cropped short, and where it had been black all over it was now shot with streaks of grey at the sides above my ears. I was twenty-six, almost as old as the war had been. I was nervous, too, I could see that in the door. I had a facial tic that lifted the corner of my mouth towards the tight scar, and I knew that my fingers were beating a tattoo on the table edge.

I was a released prisoner.

The clerk passed over my papers. There was a cheque on the top and the amount shown on its face made me whistle in surprise. Four years in a labour camp was a long while, it added up to a lot of pay, what with allowances and resettlement money. The clerk passed a metal badge over the table top.

"Better wear it, Bub. It'll get you almost anything, I guess."

"Even the blonde on the corner store counter?"

"Wearing that you'll have to fight her off!"

I looked at it and pinned it on my shirt pocket flap. It was a silver man against a background of black. His arms uplifted, and his clothes in tatters.

The clerk was looking at me with envious eyes. Sure, he was thinkin', you can get anything, Hero! I dish 'em out and you get the breaks. Four years a prisoner out of the war, and that makes you a lousy hero! God, how I hate you bastards!

I gave the badge a rub. "I'll make full use of it," I promised him. "I'm going to get all that you guys got while I was away. I'm going to raise hell and I'm going to cram it all into a couple of weeks."

I walked away and stood looking out over the field. There was a hand on my shoulder. It was dug in hard. The hand belonged to Luther.

"Oh no you're not, Johnny! You're going to take things easy and settle down straight away. You aren't going to do anything that'll attract attention to yourself. You'll play it the way it was planned for us, Johnny. That's what!"

His hand felt like something unclean perched on my shoulder. I twisted away and turned to face him. "Keep your nose out of it, Luther. I'm playing this the way I want it. It doesn't always do to stick to plans, especially when they were made such a long way off. I've had four years to know about me, you came off the Larsen two years ago. You only half know yourself. If you want to stick to the rules remember that and be careful!"

"You know, Johnny," he said, making no sign that he'd been listening. "You know, I think this little badge is going to come in quite useful. It'll make things easier all round." He unpinned it from his jacket and polished it on his sleeve.

I left him staring at the silver man and walked out towards the field. His voice reached me as I passed through the door, "I'll be seeing you, Lomar. One week from now. Don't forget and don't go for what you what you weren't entitled to!"

Seemingly innocent remarks to make, and yet there was a hidden threat behind them to play things the 'right way', and not the way I wanted.

"He's right, son. There ain't no sense in bucking against the traces. I know."

I recognised the voice before I turned round to look at him. It was Birch, a man with sixteen years pay and allowances due to him. He smiled with his lips. His eyes were cold and hard, boring right through me.

"Maybe I will," I flashed. "Maybe I won't!" I hurried out of the hall away from those eyes and Luther's high-pitched laugh.

On the edge of the shuttle-flight field they'd rigged up a notice board bearing the words "Dispersal Flights", and an arrow pointing the way towards the distant flight control tower. There were open auto-jets waiting outside the Admin building but I chose to walk. Luther and Birch should be following me out soon and I didn't want to ride down with them.

A couple of jetters passed me on the path and I saw both men lean out and wave as they went by in a cloud of dust. I grinned and flipped my hand, knowing that they wanted the same flight as I did and hoping that they wouldn't wait for me.

There were two guards outside the tower when I arrived. "Which is the Los Angeles flight?" I asked them.

"Over there." He looked at his watch. "You'd better hurry, she blows in five minutes and there's no other for an hour."

I walked between the rope barriers between ships until I could see the Lambert without being seen myself. Luther and Birch were waiting at the foot of the ramp. Somebody called to them from inside and they shook their heads after looking around. The door started to close and they moved away from the Lambert and watched the tail jets spurt flame.

They were waiting for me. I turned back the way I had come and hoped they wouldn't see me. I was scared of them. I was scared of myself, too. I thought of the government cheque in my shirt pocket and decided that I'd buy myself a trip home.

It felt funny thinking of that word. Home, what did it mean? I hadn't thought about it much before, it was just somewhere where I had always stayed and there was no particular link between word and thought association. But during the last four years I had thought about it, lived it. It had assumed an out-of-all-proportion importance to me. Johnny was almost, home, and it struck me that I was a far different Johnny from the one who had left.

I passed through the main gate without comment and plodded down the highway to Carlston. Pop. 5,700, the road sign said.

They had a bank and an Automart. I read the price notice outside the latter and went into the bank. The teller behind the counter was reading as I walked in. He frowned and slid the magazine into a drawer. It seemed as though he didn't like his afternoon to be interrupted by business, and then he caught sight of the silver and black badge. He beamed when I said I wanted to open an account.

"You a long way from home, Spacer?"

"Three hundred miles or so. Why?"

He looked uncomfortable for a moment. "If you don't want to break into that cheque I can lend you some cash." He made a movement to pull out his bill fold.

"It's all right thanks. I can cash a government cheque any time I like, can't I? There's nothing about notice."

"That's right, any way you want. But you can borrow it if you like, I don't mind at all."

I opened the account and slipped a wad of notes into my hip pocket.

I picked up the jetter next, a second-hand model five years old but guaranteed to be in good condition. The salesman should have asked for my license but he looked at my shirt and forgot about it.

Then there was Meg, the girl two streets away back home. I wouldn't want her to have a date fixed up for when I arrived. There was a phone booth in the bar across the way. I punched out her number and tried to imagine how her voice would sound.

"Guess who?"

She was cautious. "I don't know. Who?"

"You don't remember!"

"It's not...It's not Johnny Lomax is it?"

"It is, darling. Glad?"

"Yeees. Yes, of course I am. Where are you?"

"I'll be with you in about five hours all being well. I'm at a place called Carlston at the moment. Three hundred miles or so out."

"I'll meet you someplace."

I was going to ask her if she still loved me, but I thought that wouldn't be fair over the phone. Four years is a long time. She might have changed. I knew I had -- a lot.

"Round at my place," I said.

"All right, Johnny. Johnny, you don't know this, you can't -- but...."

"Five hours," I jerked out. "Give them my love."

I dropped the receiver on the rest before she had time to speak. "You've got to be waiting for me, Meg. You've got to be. That's the way we want it. That's the way we've wanted it for the past four years." I realized that I was standing in the booth talking to myself and snapped myself alive.

I closed the booth door and stood staring. She was sitting on a high stool at the end of the bar. I didn't know who she was and I didn't care. I just wanted to stand there forever and watch her.

She looked cool and desirable in a yellow summer frock which showed up the tan of her arms and legs. The sun glinted off her dark hair, and silhouetted her in the doorway.

I wanted to reach out and touch her. I wanted to hear her voice and drink out of her glass. And I couldn't move.

The first woman I had seen. For four years I had dreamed of what they looked like and how it would be to speak to one and hold her. The Rigellians had captured nurses off the hospital ships but we'd never seen any of them, just hoped to.

What did her lips feel like? Was her hair as soft and silky as it looked? Did she have a man already? Could I hope that she didn't with her looks?

She must have sensed me watching her. She turned round quickly and her full lips compressed into a tight line at the sight of me staring at her.

We stayed like that for a long time. I don't know what she thought. Maybe she didn't like strangers watching her like that, for she blushed and left her drink unfinished.

Her high heels clicked towards the door and she was gone.

It was a minute or two before I could pull myself together and go out to the auto-jet. I drove slowly up the road and caught one last glimpse of her in the driving mirror. She was standing on the sidewalk, watching me. A smile tugged at the corners of her mouth and I closed the fuel feed.

By the time I was out and onto the road she was nowhere to be seen.

Don't be a fool, Johnny, I told myself. You've got a girl already. You can't waste time chasing a dream. Get home!

But I had one more stop before I was on my way. It was at a Gunsmiths. I bought an Astra 9mm, a flat, deadly weapon that wouldn't make too much of a bulge in my pocket.

As he charged up the sale the assistant said, "That's the third gun I've sold to you people today."

I felt an icy shiver play havoc with my spine, and loaded the Astra.

"What were they like?"

His descriptions, hazy though they were, fitted Luther and Birch. I ran out of the shop and switched the engine into life. As I jerked away from the curb I heard my name shouted and saw the two of them running my way. I opened the fuel feed wide and their shouts were lost as the wind tore about my head.

When I looked back they were running towards the Automart and I wished I had picked a later model with a better turn of speed.

There was only one reason for them to have bought guns, and I was that reason. I wondered for a moment why they hadn't shot me when they saw me getting away, and I realised that they weren't fools. It wouldn't be out in the open that they'd try to kill me. It would be somewhere where there were no witnesses, and sometime soon.

Why did I have to be so independant? Why did I have to try and do things my way when they'd already been planned for me?

Maybe because I was Johnny and Johnny liked his own way.

I wondered how many other 'Johnnies' there had been amongst us released prisoners.

To hell with them all for now! Johnny was coming home!

I'd worry later -- if I had the chance.

CHAPTER TWO.

IT WAS DANGEROUS to consider using the jetter for the whole journey. I felt as if I was travelling at a crawl and that at any moment I'd see Luther and Birch overtaking and cutting in on me.

Outside the next town I drove off the road and headed into the grass bank. When I left, the jetter was blazing and a plume of black smoke hung over it. I kept to the fields and followed the road.

Every time a jetter passed me heading South I eased the Astra out of my pocket, and each time it was a needless precaution. None of them stopped and none of them were occupied by Birch or Luther.

The badge would be likely to attract attention and I pinned it inside my jacket as I entered the outskirts of town. Attention was the last thing I wanted. I was just a pedestrian taking a morning stroll. There was nothing unusual about me -- outwardly. But inwardly I was in a state of turmoil. I could feel my face twitching and smoothed the tic away with my fingers, I wished I could take the scar away too, but that wasn't the sort of thing I could steady and control. The act was over. I wasn't nervous because I had to be, I was nervous because I couldn't help it. I hated the people who had sent me here. I hated being a part of a plan that was none of my wishing; all I wanted was to have a good time, to settle down, and most of all -- to live.

Of all the people I hated Johnny Lomax was at the top of the list, and Johnny Lomax was me. When you hate yourself you're finished. You are cut off from the whole world and all your senses are directed at the very core of your being. You're blind to what goes on about you, and it takes something big to bring things back into their normal perspective.

That happened right there and then.

"Lomax! Come here, we want you!"

The jetter was standing at the curb. Luther was seated at the wheel and there was a gun in his hand centered at my belly. Birch was holding open the rear door. He was smiling with his lips again and his hand was in his pocket. "Don't try it, Johnny," he warned. "Just come here and get inside."

There was nobody else within a hundred yards of us. I climbed in and Birch slammed the door. The jetter slid smoothly from the sidewalk as Birch reached across and pocketed my Astra. He leaned back in the corner. "We can't let you live, Johnny. You realise that don't you? I'm sorry in a way because we can't afford to lose any operatives at all. What's the matter with you? What's got into you?"

"I don't know." I licked my lips. "I just didn't want to be tied down. I wanted to feel as if I was free to live my own life. I'll get over it. I don't want to die. I didn't break away really, I just took time out."

"That's where you made your mistake, Johnny. And I realise how you feel, nobody likes to die. But in your case there's nothing else for it. We couldn't trust you now. If we let you live there'd have to be someone watching you all the time, and I couldn't spare two out of the section."

"What were you going to do? Go to the military and tell them what was happening? They wouldn't have believed you for one single moment. They wouldn't even have bothered investigating. Once a war is over, Johnny, it's over. You don't capitulate to win, that's too fantastic. You capitulate because you're beaten hands down. That's what happened to Rigel, you wouldn't stand a dog's chance of making people believe otherwise. That's the beauty of it, Johnny. It's so fantastic that it's got to succeed!"

"Then why kill me? Why are you frightened of me?"

Luther's high pitched laugh set my nerves screaming. "Rich, Lomax, rich! Frightened of you! Think again. You're a spanner in the works. Nothing like this was counted on. You're going to die because

there's no provision for anything like this happening. If we let you go, the way you feel now none of us would be safe. If we don't kill you, you might kill us, and nobody likes to die." He cursed and slammed the breaks on. The jetter jerked forward on its springs and the tires screeched in protest. I craned my neck and saw there was a robotic traffic controller at the cross roads directly ahead. The traffic mounted up behind us as Birch caught hold of my arm and twisted. "Stay still, Lomax. This isn't your stop yet."

I looked out of the window and saw the sidewalk opposite my side of the vehicle filling up as the people outside waited for the pedestrian lane to be thrown open.

Luther was crouched over the wheel watching the robot. The instant it turned and faced us he started the jetter. This was what I'd been waiting for. I had to wait until our stream was on the move before I could attempt a break. They couldn't stop and pick me up again with a road full of auto-jets hooting at them, and the robot filming the incident.

I fell on Birch and elbowed him in the face. He screamed and relaxed his hold on my arm. I flung the offside door open and hurled myself at the sidewalk. I landed on my stomach with my hands shielding my face. I felt the wind knocked out of me with the sickening jar, but I had to get up and be away before they could change lanes and come back for me.

Someone helped me to my feet. "Thanks," I gasped. "Got a lift and overshot my street. Didn't realise until we'd started off again."

"You're a crazy fool," the man said. "You might have killed yourself all for a matter of a few moments walk."

I couldn't see the auto-jet now but the robot had its centre eye fixed on me and I knew it was reporting what had happened back to Headquarters. It wouldn't take long for them to have a control copter hovering over this corner, and I didn't want to be delayed by foolish official questions.

"No I wouldn't," I told him. "I come from a long line of circus folk. I could throw myself off the top of that building there and bounce like a rubber ball. You don't believe me? You want to see me do it?"

The man stepped back. "Like I said," he muttered, "Crazy!" and lost himself in the crowd. I followed his example, only I walked in the opposite direction.

It was easy picking up a lift to Los Angeles. The driver wasn't the talkative kind and I slept most of the way down. He dropped me off two blocks from home and I walked slowly, keeping my eyes on the alert for two certain people I didn't want to meet.

I pushed open the garden gate and frowned. This wasn't the house and garden pictured in my memory. The grass was a couple of feet high, and if there had been any flower beds it had completely overgrown them. Weeds were pushing through the crazy pathing path that led from the gate to the front door, and the summer house was peeling and the glass cracked.

I thought that maybe they just hadn't been able to get the garden attended to, that the war had put an end to week-end assistance; then I looked at the house. It was boarded up, there wasn't a single window visible from the front. I fought my way through the tangle of grass and weeds onto the porch. The door was chained.

I walked slowly round to the back. The same sights greeted me. Somehow, I didn't feel as badly about it as I had expected to. I was more puzzled than anything else. I didn't think that anything serious could have happened - there must be a perfectly simple and obvious explanation for it. But it was an explanation I wouldn't find by standing round and wondering. I looked at my watch and found that I still had half an hour before Meg was due to arrive. I looked across at the house next door and tried to remember who lived there. A family called Sloan. There were two of them, both middle aged. At least that's what my brain told me. I walked out onto the road and turned up their path. The garden was neat, that was the first thing that struck me; there had been time to keep it tidy here, why not next door?

I rapped on the screen door and waited. I heard footsteps along the hall and then the door opened. A woman stood there. She had been baking and there was still flour on her arms, her face was glistening and her hair was untidy. She looked about the right age.

"Remember me, Mrs. Sloan? I'm Johnny Lomax from next door. I couldn't get in. What's happened while I've been away?"

"Maybe you'd better come in."

She turned back and I followed her down the hall and into the lounge. "Len," she called, in the direction of the kitchen garden. "I want you in here a moment."

She turned to me. "First of all I'm not Mrs. Sloan. They left here three years ago. My name's Williamson." The man came in then. "And this is my husband."

He looked at her enquiringly and she told him who I was and how I thought they were the Sloans.

"Oh." He rubbed his chin thoughtfully. "Can you prove you're Lomax? We've got to be careful these days, the war gave us a lot of hoodlums and you might be up to some trickery."

I unbuttoned the flap on my shirt pocket and handed over my discharge papers. He read them through without comment and passed them over to his wife. After a few moments she gave them back to me.

"I'll tell him, Len," she said. "Men are always so hopeless at this sort of thing. They haven't been here these past nine months, Johnny. I'm afraid they were killed in an accident at the arms plant. It was quick, they never knew anything."

Half of me wanted to break down there and then, the other half was coldly disinterested. "I see," I said softly. "Who has the keys? I want to get in there."

Williamson had them. Apparently he was the one who had fixed the door chain and barred the windows. He gave them to me and offered to come on over. I said no and left them. As I walked down the path I heard his wife say to him, "But fancy taking me for Mrs. Sloan. Why, we aren't anything alike. He seemed rather strange, like he was lost in a dream or something -- do you think he's safe?"

"Of course, woman. It was the shock, he took it very well considering..."

They closed the screen door and I could hear nothing further. But I would have to be more careful of my facts in future, it wouldn't do to go around mistaking too many people. Some of them might start thinking things.

I let myself into the house and explored it curiously. All the windows were of the type that slide back into the walls and I opened the shutters from the inside and let some fresh air into the place to drive out the smell of dust and disuse. Then I walked through the bedrooms until I found the one that looked more familiar than any of the others. There were photos on the walls: 'Johnny at Pine Lake', 'Johnny -- Cadet!', 'Graduation Day!'; and many others. I stopped over to the boxwood dresser and went through the drawers. Mostly they were packed with clothes, but the top one also held a hunting knife and a small target needler. I tested the blade on my finger. It was sharp, an ugly weapon without a sheath, and I dropped it back into the drawer and took out the needler. It wasn't loaded. I hunted round until I found a box of tipped flights, loaded it, and slipped a handful into my pocket. I hadn't felt safe since Birch had taken the Astra off me, this one didn't look particularly efficient, but at least it gave me a sense of security.

I spotted a photo holder laying face down on the top of the dresser and picked it up. It was a picture of a girl in a swimsuit. It was dated six years back and written in a small, neat hand at the bottom were the words, 'To Johnny with love, Meg.'

It was the only photo of her in the room and it had been placed face down, but I didn't attach any importance to it right then. It only served to remind me that Meg was supposed to be meeting me here. I looked at my watch again. Time had passed more quickly than I had thought, she was fifteen minutes late.

Just as I was thinking that I heard footsteps on the crazy paving outside and I glanced out of the window. She looked up, saw me, and waved. I knew who it was and I went down the stairs at a run.

She was waiting for me in the hall. I stood on the bottom stair for a moment, looking at her. Johnny, I told myself, you certainly know how to pick them. She was different from the one I had seen in the bar at Carlston, no less beautiful, but beautiful in a more subdued sort of way.

"Hello, Johnny." It's good to see you again. I'm...I'm sorry about your people."

"Is that all you've got to say?" I crashed her in my arms and tried to kiss her. She twisted her head slightly and brushed my cheek with her lips. They touched the scar and made a shiver run through me.

She pushed me away and walked through into the sun room. I followed her feeling puzzled over her attitude. I told myself that it was because there had been an accident and the smell of death still seemed to hang in the air. I didn't believe me.

She was flushed as she turned to face me. "There was no need for that, Johnny. That wasn't the way we parted. If I'd known it would be like this I wouldn't have come."

Somewhere, something had slipped up. "I don't know what you mean," I said, and made a movement to touch her.

She jerked out of the way. "Of course you do. It was all over between us before you went away."

"I don't remember," I told her in an empty voice. And I didn't remember.

"You're lying. You couldn't forget. Not after the scene you made when I told you. For four years you tried to tie me down. I couldn't go anywhere without you following me, spying on me. You loved me all right, in your own jealous little way, but it got so

bad that I couldn't bear the sight of you. Don't tell me you can't remember that!"

"I remember." That was a lie but I had to try and find out where I stood now. There was only one reasoning for not remembering that I could think of. Out there, out on Rigel IV, a man like Johnny Lomax would remember only the things he wanted to remember. The unpleasant things he would cast aside like a dirty shirt. That's what he'd done. That's what he must have done, because I was Johnny Lomax and I couldn't remember. "I hadn't really forgotten but I'd hoped you had. I thought that in the time I'd been away you'd have changed your mind and forgotten about how I used to be. I've changed, Meg, I wouldn't be like that any more. For four years in that prison camp I've clung to your memory. I don't think I could do without you now."

Why say that? It was a lie and I knew it. I had tried to stop it coming out as soon as I felt it on my lips but part of me pushed it clear and it gushed forth.

Still, I had learned the reason for the down-faced photograph. It wouldn't be thrown away because it would have been like throwing a memory away. But it couldn't be looked at because it brought back too much.

"I think you've changed, Johnny. I think that being away has made a man of you. You look different, you act differently. At one time a passage like that would have been accompanied by tears."

"Let's forget about the past shall we? I don't want to hear how I used to be. I'll take you out to dinner someplace. Somewhere where we can have a quiet talk about the other me."

"I can't come with you, Johnny." She looked uncomfortable now. "I'd like to for old time's sake, but it's not possible. I tried to tell you over the phone this afternoon but you wouldn't listen to me. You see, I got married two years after you went into the fleet. I don't think you knew him, we didn't meet until you'd gone. I haven't seen much of him either. I just wanted to see you for a few moments, that's why I came. He should be calling for me any moment now. We're going to celebrate his safe return."

The very foundations on which my being was built seemed to crumble in that instant. "He wasn't by any chance a...a prisoner was he?"

A jetter stopped outside the gate. The door was open and Meg got up from her chair and ran to meet him. "Yes," she called back over her shoulder.

"Oh my God, no!" I shouted. "You've got to get away. That's not..."

"Not what?" She was clinging to his arm and staring up into his face with a look in her eyes that made me feel sick for her.

"Johnny," he said, "why don't you answer my wife's question?" He kept his hand in his pocket and his eyes on my face.

She look up brightly. "Oh, then you two do know each other after all. Why didn't you tell me, lat, before I came out?"

He looked at me and grinned. His eyes were crinkled up at the corners but his mouth was hard-set and thin.

"It slipped my memory," Luther replied. "I clean forgot."

"MEG," I said softly. "Meg, that isn't your husband! He's a fake, just like I am!"

His face blanched and hardened. I knew that he was debating whether or not to shoot me at that very instant. It was only Meg being there that was staying his hand, and I knew that if I made a move towards my pocket that even her presence wouldn't save me.

It had been a foolish thing to say with Luther present, but I couldn't hold it back. I was as much Johnny as I was me, and despite his now evident failings Johnny had definitely loved her. That part of me couldn't stand the thought of her living for another instant with a man who was not the one she had married. Maybe if he had really been Luther then Johnny wouldn't have said anything much to either of them. I think he would have been man enough to swallow his disappointment and fade out of their lives. Meg didn't mean anything to me, but I guess I had sided with Johnny over it. Knowing that Luther's sole purpose on Earth was to bring about its downfall, and possibly her death, I had to warn her. I had to get her away from him.

"Mat," she whispered, "I'm afraid of him. I should never have come. It's all my fault, he only learnt about his people today, and then I came and told him about us. It's ...it's done something to him, Mat. Please! Take me away!"

She pulled at his arm and he gave her a push towards the door. "His brain's effected," Luther snapped. "There's no telling what he might do. You'd better get out of here. Go to the jetter and wait for me. We can't leave him in this state, but it's not safe for you to stay."

She hesitated. "I don't like to leave you alone with him. What if he turns on you? Hadn't we better call the..."

"Go! Get out quickly, Meg. The longer you stay the worse you'll make him!"

She turned and ran at that. I heard the gate open and the auto-jet door slam closed. But if she had been able to see his face when he spoke to her she wouldn't have gone. It was a picture of hate and triumph. She hadn't believed me and now he had a perfect alibi for murder: Manslaughter!

"He was crazy with jealousy. He said crazy things and I made my wife leave and wait outside for me. Then he attacked me. I had to kill him to save my own life and her's."

"Birch! Birch, come quickly." He had the gun out of his pocket now and pressing against my side.

Birch came in through the rear door. "Be quick about it, Luther! Your wife's edgy and if you don't get back to her soon she'll be up here looking for you."

"I won't waste any time. Where's that gun? Pass it to me." He grinned at me. "I'm going to kill you, Lomax, but it's going to be called suicide."

The Astra I had bought that morning was passed over to him. He slipped the catch off and handed Birch his own gun. "Right in the

mouth." The muzzle of the Astra swung up towards my face. He brought it up slowly, savouring the beads of sweat that ran down my cheeks.

"For God's sake, Luther! Get on with it!"

Birch was nervy. He didn't want anything to go wrong this time and he lurched towards me. I saw Luther's eyes flicker as he looked his way for an instant, and lashed out with my foot.

It cracked against Luther's shin with a force that numbed my leg. He howled once in agony, and went out like a light.

All I wanted then was to get away as fast as I could and as far as I could. I forgot about the needler in my pocket and swung a wild blow at Birch. It caught him high on the side of the head as he guided it away with a hastily flung up hand. It was the hand that held Luther's gun. It raked my knuckles and stung like fury, but it spun out of his hand.

I made a run for the door as he dived on the floor to retrieve it. Somebody filled the doorway as I raced towards it. I could hear her panting from the run up the path and I could see the look of horror spread across her face as she saw Luther lying stretched out on the floor. I crashed into her as I made for the space between her body and the door jamb, and I fell against her legs. There was a roar behind me and the panting sound suddenly choked off.

I raised myself from the floor. Birch's shot had caught her full in the throat. I heard a gagging noise from behind and saw Birch vomit. He turned and ran for the rear of the house and the open windows. I could hear the sound of his body crashing through the shrubs and fading away until all was silent.

Meg's death had been practically instantaneous. The look of horror was still frozen on her face. I turned away from her and sat with my head in my hands on the bottom stair. I tried to think what I could do.

The solution hit me between the eyes. I remembered seeing Birch drop Luther's gun as he turned to run. That was all I needed to turn myself into a witness, and Luther into a murderer. That, and nobody investigating the sound of the shot.

I got up and took my shirt off. I slipped Meg's feet out of her shoes and placed the grey casuals by the side of the basket-weave settee. I dropped my shirt on the other side.

The gun was lying in the centre of the floor. I picked it up with a handkerchief and rubbed off Birch's prints. Luther was still unconscious and there was a bump the size of a walnut where he had hit his head against the floor. I pressed the gun into his hand in the firing position and dropped it on the floor just out of reach of his outstretched hand. I picked up the Astra and wiped it clean, then I walked upstairs and deposited it in the drawer with the hunting knife. I remembered about the needler just in time, and left that there, too.

Then I walked next door to the Williamson's and asked could I use their phone. It was one of the expensive types with the viewer attachment. They had one down at the Twelfth Precinct too, and I remembered to look suitably shocked and nervous as I reported that Matthew Luther had shot his wife in my house after following her and finding us together.

It was well after midnight when that had finished with me at the station, and I crept into the hotel bed with a feeling of well-being. The evidence all pointed at a 'crime of passion', as it is so called, and Luther was the unfortunate husband who was guilty.

The only part about it that I didn't like had been smirching Meg's name, but then, that couldn't be helped. I told them that Meg and I had been friends from long back. I knew Luther was her husband, and he knew what Meg and I had been to each other. He had warned me on the trip back to Earth to keep away from her but I felt that I had at least to call her and let her know I was still alive. I said that I had called from Carlston with no other intention than that in mind, but she had said that she must see me. That she had always regretted leaving me and taking up with Luther.

Naturally, I had arranged to see her.

I knew that Luther was now out of the way and that made one less of us. Birch wouldn't come forward because he was one of the master keys in the plan, and Luther wouldn't expect him to. Luther knew that he couldn't endanger the plan, he was the type who would die before he could do that. He'd more than hate me now, but there was no manner in which he could incriminate me. He would rely on Birch or one of the others to do to me what he wasn't in a position to do. He'd get his satisfaction that way. As for me, I was determined that he wouldn't.

When I awoke in the morning, however, the feeling of satisfaction had given way to one of deep depression. Now that I had definitely chosen on the side of Earth, the enormity of the task ahead overwhelmed me. I had never given it much serious thought before, though that was hardly surprising for the whole series of events had taken place within twenty four hours. Now that I came to consider it in the cold light of morning and in all its completeness, I could see that and attempt to foil them without other help would be worse than useless. No doubt I would have hit upon a feasible solution given time, but Luther and Birch had already supplied me with one. I could think of none better, none that were logical, at any rate.

I used the service phone to enquire from the reception desk the whereabouts of the nearest military camp. I found to my relief that I had no need to report my movements to the police for the South-western Command Headquarters were within the city limits.

My release badge saw me through to the Special Security Branch of the Space Command. There was a Commander sitting facing me, and an ordinary Rating standing by the recording bank. I had just finished my statement, the Commander looked at me for a moment and then snapped his fingers.

"Play back," he said.

The Rating switched on and I heard my own voice greet me. I listened intently, just in case I had missed anything out.

"My name is Johnny Lomax, but I wasn't born that. I wasn't born here, I was born in a laboratory on Rigel Six."

There was a grant from the Commander and I continued, "No questions yet, let me continue. It was in the very early stages of the war that the Rigelians foresaw the lasting deadlock and realised that the fighting could last indefinitely, without either side getting the edge on their adversary. They laid their plans for capitulation and eventual victory as the first prisoners were brought in. For the next two years their major objectives were the hospital ships and their women nurses. They got the woman, they had the men.

None of the men or women were allowed to mingle with members of the other sex, they never even saw each other but there were births. Thousands of them in the Rigelian labs.

"They had already perfected a method of stimulated growth, and soon each male prisoner had an android counterpart. Each android was operated upon to resemble its original. There was no need for faithful reproduction as a prisoner changes in the interval he is away from home. As long as there was an outwardly passable product the Rigelians were satisfied. Where the mind was concerned it was a different matter. It was essential that the memory and habit patterns were exactly reproduced in each prisoner's android."

"How?" That was from the Commander.

"The prisoners' brains were drained of their knowledge. That knowledge was fed into the corresponding android via an electronic helmet comprised of storage cells that collated and combined the information into its proper categories.

"Take me for instance. I am an android, and I am also a person who had been Johnny Lomax. I am completely, inseparably, a part of him. I can't get away from him if I wanted to. The original Johnny Lomax lived for the day he could get home, and for a certain girl. I think that's how he gave me partial freedom. There were certain things he chose to forget about, consciously and subconsciously, that the helmet couldn't find. That gave me a chance for my own development and the real me found myself in full agreement with his sentiments. That made all the difference between a willing puppet and a misfit in their plan, because when they tried to condition me it didn't stick. I let them believe that it had because I wanted to live. With being able to think for myself I was able to think round their conditioning and submerge it so that I felt no urge to follow their bidding.

"The purpose of us androids is to lay the way for Rigelian victory. We aren't to take up our human counterpart's old occupation. Our task is to get into various important industries and branches of communication and supply. When the time comes we're to strike! Disorganise and kill! That's our sole purpose, we're expendables, a severed arm of the Rigelians that's capable of destruction."

"And a plan like that would bring a surrendered race to victory?"

There was a snigger from the Rating that I hadn't noticed at the time. I glared at him and listened as my voice went on in answer to the Commander's question.

"Naturally not. Not by the use of us androids alone. There was more to the plan than that. Two years ago they secretly withdrew sections of their battle fleet from the operation areas and salted them out amongst the stars to await recall when they are needed. That battle fleet, given the support back here, could wipe Earth off all future star maps!"

"Tell me, Mr. Lomax, and what did they do with the real prisoners?"

Did I detect a note of sarcasm there that I had missed before?

"They loaded the whole forty thousand into robot controlled ships and head them out. You won't see them again. Those ships were rigged to explode in space."

The Commander nodded and the recorder was switched off. He tilted back in his chair. "Lomax," he said, "I've been remarkably patient with you. I sat through that twice just so that you could hear for yourself how utterly preposterous the whole madcap affair sounds."

I jumped to my feet. "It's the truth. You've got to believe it! Goddamn you, you've got to! I'm not Lomax any more than you are. Do something! Round them all up and kill them. Stop them getting into industry before the whole world goes up in your face. I've told you all I know, now it's up to you to take the necessary action. I can't fight them on my own."

"Get out," he roared. "Get out before I have you thrown out on your neck. If you think I've got nothing better to do than listen to fantastic ramblings you'd better think again!"

I shouted at him and tried to reach him to bang some sense into that thick head of his. The next thing I knew was that my arms had been seized from behind and were being twisted from their sockets.

The two guards frog-marched me out of his room. The last thing I heard before they pitched me down the steps was the Commander telling the recorder operator to take my statement spool and burn it.

I hoped he'd die slowly when the Rigelians came. And I hoped to see the look on his face and the blind terror in his eyes.

I spent the rest of the morning on the phone trying to get some Security Branch or one of the armed services to listen to me. Each time I started on my tale there was some such comment as, "The Lomax screwball again!", and the receiver would be slammed down.

The Commander had been busy.

I got nowhere with it. By the afternoon the anger had left me and I was just plain sorry for them. Each time I was cut off they lessened their chances of survival, and there was nothing I could do about it. You can't convince a person who doesn't want to believe, no matter how good your intentions are.

I thought of going back to the house to rest up and try and find a possible solution to beat official pig-headedness, and then I remembered that Birch would probably be there waiting for me. If he wasn't, someone else might be, and I wouldn't be giving myself a fair chance. I decided to go back to the hotel.

When I got there the clerk at the reception desk called me across to tell me that there were some men waiting to see me. I thought it might be the police, Birch wouldn't know where I was staying. It wasn't the police, it was the video-hawks sensing a scoop for their networks. There were five of them there, each trying to edge the others aside.

"How old was she, Lomax?"

"What were you really doing when her husband came?"

"Was she going to divorce him or just leave him?"

"What happened when you jumped him?"

"Come on, Lomax, give us something more to go on than the police release."

I didn't know which was worse, facing Birch or them. I didn't stop to answer them. I raced past the clerk and into the lift. I got the gates closed just in time and was locked in my room by the time they reached the top of the stairs. I phoned down to the desk and told the clerk to have them out of the hotel before I got an injunction served on them for breach of privacy. I also ordered a bottle of Canadian Rye and some water. I didn't know what it tasted like but Johnny had liked it when he'd been alive.

It tasted good. I lay down on the bed and drank and thought. I thought that maybe I'd missed my bet with clearing the reporters out of the lobby. I still had no intention of bringing up the murder business, but as they were after the sensational for their

viewing screens I didn't see why I shouldn't give them the information which the military wouldn't accept.

There was only one trouble there. It would have to come from somebody other than Johnny Lomax. Once I mentioned my name I wouldn't get anywhere with what I wanted to tell them, they'd be more interested in Luther and Meg and Johnny Lomax. I had to get out of the hotel and phone through to the Central News Agency using some other name.

I called the desk again and asked for room service. It was a new clerk on and he said someone would be up right away. Five minutes later there was a rap on the door.

I opened it and tried to slam it in his face. It was one of the reporters who had been waiting for me in the lobby. Evidently he'd slipped someone some money to get this interview -- the interview that he wasn't going to get.

He had his foot between the jamb and the edge of the door. I stamped on his toe and heard him curse, but he wasn't giving up that easily. He tried putting his weight against the door and I felt it opening despite my attempts to stop him.

Right, I thought. I will give you something to remember me by.

I jumped away from the door and dived for the phone, pulling the plug out of its socket. He came through the door like a thunderbolt and careered across the room. I raised the phone and waited for him to turn round, but I was slow or his reflexes were faster than I had accounted for. He shot once before I threw, and was pressing the trigger for the second time as it caught him on the side of his head. The dart struck the carpet not a foot from where I was standing, and exploded with sufficient force to tear the fabric and splinter the wooden floor blocks. I revised my estimation of a needler right there and then.

The bogus reporter was out cold. I plucked the needler out of his nerveless fingers and dropped it in my pocket. I seemed to have been making a habit of losing guns or leaving them lying around, and I was determined that I wasn't going to do the same with this one.

I knew what had happened, the crime section of the midday video news had broadcast the police release on Meg's murder, and must also have stated that I was staying at this hotel. Birch had picked it up and had had a man waiting for me. It was something I should have thought of, but it's the simplest things which are most often ignored. I tied him up with a sheet and bungled him under the bed. It would be some time before he could wriggle free and report his failure back to Birch and Co.

I had wanted Room Service to show me the way to the back stairs of the hotel, but bearing in mind what had just happened I didn't bother. I hunted round and found them for myself.

There was nobody at the rear of the building to stop me as I cautiously made my way through the yard and out into the side street. I breathed a sigh of relief as I saw the street was empty. With everything seeming to pile up all at once I had a feeling that wherever I stepped I'd be walking right into danger.

It was an uncomfortable feeling to have.

The trouble with making a call from the metropolitan area was that practically all the public phone booths there were fitted with the vision attachment, and I had no inclination to be recognised by any news-eager video reporter.

It took me an hour or two touring the bars and drug stores before I eventually found a booth in a bar which harboured a sensible sort of phone. I punched for information, asked for the code of Central News Agency and finally got through to them. A woman answered the phone first of all and I told her about the Rigelian plan to wipe out Earth. She asked me to wait for a moment while she got one of the bosses. I fumed and waited for about ten minutes and then a man's voice asked me what I wanted. I repeated the whole story again and at the end of it he laughed.

"Brother," he said, "you've got the wrong code. This is the CNA, what you want is the Central Light Entertainment Bureau. They'd go nuts for that sort of bilge. Hold on and I'll get you their code signal."

I told him what I thought of him and said that if he wasn't killed in the fight I'd take great delight in sending the stupid mule to hell along with all other reporters and security men.

I dropped the receiver before he could think of a suitable reply. I had never imagined that people could be so crass stupid. It appeared that Luther and Birch had been right, the plan was so fantastically simple that nobody would give it any serious thought. It looked as if anything was to be done I was the one who would have to do it. And with the odds at forty thousand to one I couldn't see much chance of success. I supposed I was the one who was really stupid. If I'd had any sense at all I would have given up long ago and left them to their own ends, but something inside me kept plugging away; telling me that my own possible salvation depended on the Rigelian plan being frustrated.

I walked out of the booth and into the road feeling like hell.

I walked right into the arms of a Security Guard and a uniformed police officer.

I knew now why the woman had kept me waiting ten minutes whilst she went off to phone her boss.

"Lomax?" asked the security man.

The police officer looked at the scar on my cheek and before I could think up a good lie he'd said, "Yes." He put his hand on my arm. "Johnny Lomax, I arrest you for attempted suicide and of being of unsound mind."

"You're crazy," I told him.

"You were seen to fling yourself from a moving car in the town of Wawona yesterday morning. The incident was recorded by the control robot and flashed to Los Angeles this morning after your picture had appeared on the screens. And from the story you've been spreading concerning this purported Rigelian plan to seize Earth, it has been decided to take you into custody for your own safety."

"Why?"

"Hell, it's clear enough isn't it," the security man snapped. "A guy shoots his wife, and your lover incidently, in your presence. It turns your brain and because you were once a prisoner of the Rigelians for four years the memory is so strong in your mind that you dreamed this thing up. Attempted suicide and then that: Try and tell me that you aren't crazy!"

"But I ~~hadn't~~ met his wife when I jumped from the car. And I jumped from the car because I'd been captured by a couple of the androids who wanted me out of the way."

"See, what'd I tell you? As crazy as they make 'em. Listen, Lomax, you knew Luther had warned you off his wife, you gave that in

the statement last night. You thought you could end it all by jumping from the car when you found you were making a mess of things, only it didn't work and the lure was so strong that you had to go and meet your woman. Why try and tie it all in with these androids and stuff? You're only making it far worse for yourself. Once they get you inside they'll never let you go. Forget all about this Rigelian stuff and stick to the facts. I'm telling you for your own good. They can soon clear up a suicide mania these days, but the other stuff isn't nearly so good."

One thing I didn't want was to be locked away. I knocked them flying and started to run. Something burned my shoulder but I didn't stop to investigate it. I kept on running and dodging. And the part of me that was Johnny Lomax remembered the tougher side of town where for a price a man could buy murder or refuge from the police and Security.

I made for that area and managed to lose them in the back streets and slums where a man could vanish in the stinking humanity that swarmed the hot sidewalks.

I found myself a deserted warehouse and crept round the back where I couldn't be seen from the street. I could feel the blood running down my side from the wound where the explosive dart had lodged itself in the shoulder padding of my jacket. I eased my arms out of the coat and slipped my shirt off my shoulder. I felt the wound with trembling fingers and tried to pick out the embedded fragments of metal.

It didn't help much, each time my blunt fingers prodded away it started the blood gushing out. I wadded a handkerchief into a rough pad and slipped it under my shirt to stop the rubbing of the foreign matter.

I was lucky that it wasn't as bad as I had expected it to be. And I had to thank the fact that there hadn't been time for anything but a hasty snap shot as the Security Guard clambered to his feet.

CHAPTER FOUR.

FOR A PRICE you can buy anything, and it all starts with buying information. By the time it was dark I wondered whether I'd have enough ready cash to see me through the contacts and on to the end man. It so happened I had.

I realised that now the police and security were also on my trail I would have to lose Johnny Lomax and become somebody else. It was no longer just a matter of buying refuge, if I wanted to be free to move about I would have to have a different face. The scar would give me away every time. It had to go.

He bent over me with a pair of fine-nosed tweezers and started picking out the bits of metal dart from my flesh. He was big and carelessly dressed, but his touch was gentle, almost soothing.

"If you have the money, I can arrange for it to be done," he told me. "When you are finished with, even your own mother won't be able to recognise you."

I wasn't worried about that. My mother wouldn't know me in any case, she'd died out in space with forty thousand men - and she had never seen me. But I was worried about Birch and the police and security.

"How much?" I asked him.

He didn't answer for a moment. He put a dressing on my shoulder and sat down facing me. He straggled his legs on either side of the chair and rested his chin on the back. The chair creaked in protest. "Usually I never make a practice of asking a man's name, but then it's usually a different class of person who comes to me. Usually, they can't afford to pay much for my services and contacts, and when I meet a man who is different I up the prices. You're Johnny Lomax, aren't you? I've seen your face on the screens." I couldn't do anything but nod my head. "You are also a released prisoner and that means you've got plenty of money. It'll come high for you. Say ten thousand credits and that buys complete silence, too."

I jumped when I heard him mention that figure. Ten thousand credits would set a man up in comfort for about five years. The price was high, but I had to take it. I had close on eleven thousand credits left in the Carlston account. I said he could have an extra five hundred for a set of papers and the trouble of getting to Carlston and back. But I added a rider to the effect that the papers must state I was rejected for military service. He didn't ask why, he didn't even hesitate. Not after he'd learnt that we were the only two who knew of the account. I knew that even now I was paying far too much, he had accepted too readily. But I didn't dare bicker in case he decided to back out and I was left as Johnny Lomax. He had the upper hand on the deal, but knowing that he wasn't the sort of man to cross me eased the knowledge.

The surgeon was a drunken sot but he knew his job and the more he drank the steadier seemed his hand. I fretted away four weeks of my time in a small room with only a video screen and an occasional visit from the doctor to liven things up. At the end of the month I took off the bandages and looked at my new face. It was more than satisfactory. I was no longer Johnny Lomax, I was Lucas Thorne -- as my papers proved.

In the time I had spent in that room my name had been dropped from the video newscasts. I knew I was still on file with security and the police, but I was no longer in the public eye. I could get out minus the fear of recognition, and I had laid my plans.

For a price I could have bought murder, but I hadn't the price now, and even if I had I wanted to know that the job had been well done. I was about to become a murderer!

We had been divided into cells before we left Rigel VI, each cell composed of those who were returning to a certain town or area. I was in the Los Angeles group with Birch at its head as organiser and contact man with other cells on the American continent. Another android called Sanger was his deputy.

Minneapolis, Portland, Des Moines, Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Washington, Philadelphia, New York; I knew them all. There was not one man at the top who wasn't written down in my memory together with his deputy and the areas they handled.

I couldn't possible kill forty thousand men with my own hands, but I could, given luck and time, kill twenty-two and hope that that would disorganise their plans. 55

I was to be a murderer and yet I did not feel like one or even consider myself to be such. When a soldier kills an enemy, he isn't a murderer. This wasn't war -- not on the surface -- but it would become that eventually. I wasn't waering a uniform and carrying a pay book that qualified me to kill with complete exoneration, but I was fighting an enemy. An enemy which was all the more dangerous because nobody would believe that they existed as foes. They were men -- repatriated prisoners waering a badge of honour which made them heroes! I'd lost my badge when I turned against them, just as I had now lost my face and previous identity.

I still had enough money left over from my depleted Carlston account to purchase information on where Sanger and Birch were working. Sanger was at the arms plant outside Burbank. Birch was at the space yard at Venice, and working as foreman on the drive assembly line.

I picked on Sanger first, just to get my hand in ready for Birch. I didn't want it to be a killing that would arouse suspicion in either the minds of Birch or the police. I wanted it to be an accident.

It was easy enough to get a job at the arms plant. The Earth fleet was preparing to cover new grounds out beyond the Rigel boundary line and they had to get the ships provisioned and be ready for whatever they may find out there. They needed all the men they could in factories. I took a job as storeman.

Sanger met with an accident. A stacker's breaks wouldn't work and he happened to be in its way. It was regretable. The driver wasn't to blame, I told him that when I showed him the worn coupling. He stopped worrying and I changed the coupling for a new one. It had been hard steel. Hard to cut. I handed in a genuinely worn one and threw the other in the Pacific.

At the end of the week I drew my cards from the time office and told them I didn't think I was doing enough to help. I wanted a job where I'd be more in contact with the finished parts that were for the fleet. I told them that I was going to try for a job at the Venice space yard.

It hadn't really been an easy thing to arrange for Sanger to die. It still left a bitter taste in my mouth, but I knew that where I had done it once I could do it again, and as the next one was Birch, I almost felt eager to get to the yard. I owed him a killing. That killing was for Meg, and there was also an attempt on me that had failed.

The pay at the yard was twenty-five credits a week as an experienced fitter. I drew fifteen, with future prospects for the other ten bright -- if I was interested in the money, which I wasn't. It was Birch I was interested in, and I was lucky. On the second day I had been working there a man on Birch's shift went off ill. I took over because I was the last one to be taken on and it was an unpopular shift, the night shift.

There were eight of us to work the belt, spaced out at intervals of three yards. I took over at the starting end of the belt where the main drive units slid onto the moving strip. I hadn't been working there more than half an hour when the belt sprang off its guide hooks on my section. The belt trundled to a halt with six foot or more of its length out of alignment, and Birch ran across to find out what was causing the stoppage.

"It's the belt," I told him. "It jumped the hooks and came adrift." I didn't tell him about or show him the metal bar I had rammed between the hooks as the drum rotated. I'd snatched that away as soon as it had performed its duty.

He grunted. "All right," he shouted down the line, "take a break until I find out what the trouble is." The others knocked off and took the opportunity to sneak a smoke or whatever they wanted to do. That left just Birch and myself in the shed. I passed him a hand lamp and picked one out for myself. "I'll come down with you," I said. "It happened on my section. I'd like to know what happened."

He nodded and we unscrewed the shielding plates from the edge of the run. It was black under the belt and there wasn't much room to move around. The beam from my hand light shone on the back of Birch's neck and he knocked it down.

"You're supposed to be looking for the trouble," he said. "And not at me."

I felt a thrill tighten my spine as I thought of what was to come next.

"Birch, do you know who I am?"

"Don't be funny!" He directed the beam above his head.

"Well, do you?"

"Of course. I'll tell you if it makes you happy and keeps you quiet. You're Thorne. Shine your torch over to the right more."

I moved it so that his neck was centered in its beam again. I wanted to see his face when I told him. "Not Thorne," I corrected him. "Lomax. Johnny Lomax."

He stiffened first of all. I could see his shoulders hunch forward and his neck lock back. Then slowly he twisted round and I saw his face. His lips were drawn back exposing his teeth, and his eyes were screwed up as though he was about to cry.

"What made you say that?"

"Because it's true. I got a face lift, Birch, and had the scar removed. Sanger didn't know me either, that's why he's dead. You know about the accident don't you? Only it wasn't a real accident. I killed him just as surely as if I'd been driving that stacker."

I told him why, and I had the needler pointed at his stomach. I could practically feel his flesh creep and then his muscles start to tense up ready for the leap. I felt sorry for him, he was thinking that he might have a chance to reach me before I fired, and he was imagining my neck between his hands. I didn't want him to think about that too much, I didn't want him to be too disappointed when he found that he couldn't do it.

I squeezed the trigger twice and he fell without a sound.

I climbed over his body and started to man-handle the belt back into place on the hooks. It was hot in that confined space. My hands were wet and I couldn't get a real grip on the belt. I could feel the sweat running down my face and back. There was a pool of it where my stomach was creased up with being bent double, and I wished that I'd let Birch finish the job before I shot him.

My fingers were bleeding by the time I had finished. I backed out over him and felt his heart though I knew that there was no need.

It was my intention that his death would appear to be an accident, and to do that I would have to start the belt moving again with Birch still on it. I didn't like the idea. I didn't like it

one littel bit. I knew he was dead but there was still something horrible about the idea. I felt sick when I thought of it but I couldn't put it off all night. I climbed out from under the belt and ran across to the switch. My fingers lingered on it for a moment and I closed my eyes. I tried to bring myself to knock it over when something collided into me and sent me flying.

Somebody hauled me to my feet and I opened my eyes again. There were two Security Guards there. One holding me up, and the other rising from the floor. Even as I looked at them more filled the entrance to the shed.

"Name," rasped the one who was holding me.

I told him Lucas Thorne.

"Somebody called Birch. He's supposed to be in here. Where is he?"

I pointed to the dark well beneath the belt and he moved away from me as the rest started to close in on it. I thought fast, I didn't want them finding him under there with two needler bursts in his belly. I didn't want them to start questioning me about how and why it happened.

"You'd better be careful, " I shouted after him. "I was down there with him and it looked as though he had a gun in his hip pocket. I don't know for sure, but it looked that way to me."

They started shouting for him to come out with his hands up, as they edged back from the opening. He didn't answer, and I didn't expect him to.

"We'll give you five seconds to get out, Birch, and then we start shooting."

The officer started to count, and three of his men wormed their way on their stomachs to the black and silent opening. They gave him six seconds in all before they started shooting.

"Up at the end," I shouted. "This way."

When they pulled him out I didn't recognise him, but the guards seemed satisfied.

The one who had spoken to me before came up and asked for my papers. I dug deep into my overall pocket and handed them across. He read them through and took his time about it. "You've never been in any of the armed forces?" he asked.

I shook my head. "No. I've got what they call a lazy heart. It says so there."

He handed them back to me without a word.

I asked him could I go outside. That I didn't feel well. I walked out and steered clear of another group of men with two workers in their midst. I thought I caught a glimpse of release badges on their overalls, and when I looked back I could see that they pictured a silver man against a black background.

All work seemed to have stopped and I pushed my way through the shift workers and out of the yard gate. Nobody tried to stop me, they were all waiting to see what would happen next, but I didn't want to know. At last I had been believed and somebody had taken action. I didn't know why, but as long as the results were there to show, I was satisfied.

I went to the nearest bar and ordered a drink. I sat there for a long time watching the video screen showing some play of other. I don't know what it was, I only really woke up to the present when they flashed an important news item.

I put my drink down and moved closer to the screen. The excited face of an announcer appeared in the centre of the screen and he started to speak straight away. (58.)

"Ladies and gents. The hottest piece of news to hit the air since the Rigelians capitulated, has just been released from Security! It appears that all those released prisoners who came back five weeks ago were fakes! They weren't the originals! The Rigelians had planted them on Earth to disorganise our production and supply lines. One month back one of our patrolling battle ships in the area beyond Rigel reported to base that they had discovered a graveyard of ships and floating debris. Amongst that debris they were able to reconstruct human skeletons - and, listeners, none of our ships had ever been out that far before!

"Within an hour of the news being reported back to Security on Earth, we had the Operations Fleet searching for a Rigelian fleet which had been rumoured as being in wait. The battle was fought last week and the Earth ships gained a decisive victory!

"Other information concerning the androids who were posing as the original Earthmen had previously been handed in to Security, we don't know who did it but we suspect that it must have been a renegade android. With the latest news that came from the patrol ship, Security started tracing all these androids, and today, not one hour back, they moved in and captured them. There has been no further news release from the military or Security as to what is to happen to these androids, but the common feeling in these studios is that they will be destroyed as an uncontrollable menace.

"Just as soon as there is any further release or more details available, we will interrupt the programme again."

I reached up and switched off the set. The bartender looked at me and started to protest, but I didn't wait to hear him. I walked out and onto the street. My struggle for recognition was over. I was free...free from fear and Johnny Lomax. I hadn't realised that all of him had departed until right now, and I felt sort of empty and lost without him.

I wondered what I could do now. What my future was going to be as Lucas Thorne. And suddenly I had an idea.

I looked in my wallet. Thirty credits. Fifteen credits for a ticket that would take me almost to Carlston. That was where I had started to lose Johnny. The first day when I came here and found somebody who stirred me into being a man on my own account.

The remaining fifteen credits wouldn't see me exactly rolling in money. I wondered if there would be a vacancy for a bartender in Carlston, as I started to walk towards the station. I wondered if that woman with the yellow dress and dark hair would be there when I arrived. I wondered again if she already had a man.

If she didn't...then Lucas Thorne was coming home to stay!

THE END
 of

"TWO CAME BACK"

a
novelette by

David S. Gardner.

SCIENCE-FICTION

PERSONALITIES

MOVING AWAY from the fiction page to write this article probably entitles me to wear long hair and gaze sternly through horn-rimmed glasses while holding forth about Trends and Cycles. The result would most likely be stodgy and thoroughly uninteresting, yet I hold certain quite determined views about science-fiction and notice in some quarters a regrettable trend or drift away from them.

Let's examine the word itself for a start. "Science-hyphen-fiction." Equal emphasis on both sections, isn't there? "Fiction," of course, needs no dictionary. "Science"? Well, now, have a look round at some of the stories being published and ask yourself.

To a plain, straightforward chap like me, SF is what it says. It possess a plausible central theme based on some genuine aspect of science as we know it today, with a scientific twist or "gimmick" holding the key to the climax.

A fairly brisk element of action is needed, of course, and to this end the unfortunate author -- slaving all day over a hot typewriter -- ought to be allowed a little latitude, but we can reasonably divide modern "SF" into three broad categories -- (i) genuine SF, as outlined above (ii) cowboy-and -Indian epics unashamedly transplanted to some distant planet (iii) tales of mystery and imagination, a la Edgar Allan Poe. The Americans are notorious for stories in the two last-named categories. Often good stuff, maybe, but not pure SF. H.G. Wells and Jules Verne wrote science-fiction, Poe didn't.

This dissertation has thus been cunningly led to the point where I confess that nearly twenty years have elapsed since I began to earn my living as a writer. Instead of a standard model typewriter, I started out with a portable, as being easier to carry to the pawnshop. Fortunately, it never became necessary. Surprisingly enough, even though I've moved round the world quite a bit, I've never washed dishes in a Chicago beanery or stowed away on a tramp steamer or herded sheep in Australia, as so many authors seem to have done. I've always managed three meals a day and when I've travelled I've travelled in comfort. Maybe I've missed something this way. I don't know. I never claim to be a kitchen worker or a shepherd. Only someone who writes stories.

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Part of this job is knowing what's been written in the past and what's being turned out contemporarily. (Nothing causes more gloomy sorrow than getting a good idea only to be told "It's been done, old man.")

The works of Wells and Verne I knew from boyhood. They led to a lot of spare-time study of astronomy and eventually (about 1928) to American SF. I was actually thinking of writing some of it when "1939-45 and All That" threw a spanner into the works.

It did more than that. It brought one particular SF theme to grim reality.

You'll have gathered that these tired old eyes have scanned quite a few chapters through the years. They saw in the early thirties some fantastic stories about people releasing the power of the atom. It caused quite a lot of guffaws among the unimaginative -- even louder than the braying laughter that greeted the idea of ever being able to send a rocket to the Moon.

Any comment?

Is there any comment, either, on the possibility that things we're writing about today -- quite a bit in advance of nuclear fission and journeys to Mars -- will one day come true?

So, on the promise of that proverbial ill-wind, SF in this country received a rocket-boost from the Hiroshima bomb. A torrent of the stuff began to pour from the presses as soon as enough paper could be found to print it on. Some was good: a lot of it was dreadful -- quite dreadful.

One thing appeared certain, however -- that SF was due to boom. But if the new boom got away on the wrong foot, so to speak, and went sprawling into ignominy because of the "inter-planetary war" merchants and the "beautiful native girls on Jupiter" nonsense it would be little short of a tragedy for me and all the other enthusiasts who have loved genuine SF since early days. There seemed, indeed (although I don't want to sound too self-righteous about it) some sort of public duty involved to steer post-war SF along proper paths.

Therefore Deegan got busy and found an enlightened publisher whose ideas coincided with his own. Thus was born the "Old Growler" series, concerning which several thousand readers have been kind enough to express appreciation with pen and paper. And if several thousand prove sufficiently excited to take that trouble, many hundreds of thousands more must like the stories, too.

The system of "Old Growler" planetary exploration is built, I hope, on a plausible forecast of the fashion in which this work will one day be carried out. Each tale possesses a scientific "gimmick" and the series covers separately such branches of specialised study as light, sound, botany, electricity, mechanics, hydraulics, chemistry, maritime zoology, biology and mathematics.

But one particular problem cropped up. First requirement, naturally was a good story --- because, after all, we do read for pleasure and the fiction side of SF ranks equally with the scientific. After that came the question of how advanced the scientific angle ought to be. Take an electrical "gimmick," for instance. Should we have a simple twist based on Ohn's Law or a more complicated affair hingeing on characteristics from the sine curve of a three-phase generator? The latter might please

advanced SF fans; it would undoubtedly baffle and confuse the bulk of comparative newcomers.

So the net was deliberately cast wide, trying to hit on a formula which not only interested the "converted" but also gripped those who picked up a science-fiction book for the first time, wondering what it was all about. Both groups seemed to like the "Old Growler" style. They said it seemed "real."

Now there you have it. And it brings us back to those "beautiful babes on Jupiter." To my mind the answer's quite clear -- there just aren't any. Nor any likelihood, either. It's not plausible. And it's one of those definite views I mentioned earlier.

Let me explain. Wherever the "Old Growler" trio journey, they encounter our old friend the "Bug-eyed Monster" in various guises. A lot of unjustified sneers are thrown at the BEM. Fortunately, he's not usually a sensitive type.

But what sensible theory can be advanced for the presence of exact replicas of human beings on distant planets? (Most of them, you may remember -- in unscience-fiction -- conveniently speak English. Or, if not, the spacemen start from scratch to learn a completely alien language and within the hour are exchanging elaborate technical data).

There are those who maintain that planets offering physical conditions similar to those of Earth will automatically develop identical life-forms. Well, on our own planet we've traced the system of protoplasm and subsequent evolution. In very early stages the pattern of life-forms was varied, chaotic. Then, for no reason that scientists can discover, one variety among all the wriggling multitude gained ascendancy so that now every major animal is a vertebrate, with one mouth, two eyes, two ears, two nostrils and four limbs, while most of them also have tails.

Somewhere along the line back to dim, steamy eras when the world was young there's a common ancestor. We have later ones, of course -- the reptile that gave rise to birds, another that developed into the first mammal and even Darwin's "missing link" at the point where Man and the apes took separate paths. But that earlier ancestor -- the first mutant which was to set the one head, two eyes, four limbs pattern. Suppose it had been gobbled up by a hungry neighbour? Suppose it had been accidentally fried in a volcanic eruption or a boulder had fallen from some prehistoric cliff -- what then? Surely, from the mess of chaotically-designed squashy things squirming in Cambrian mud a quite different pattern would have won pre-eminence.

What pattern? Well, I suppose it would be our old friend the BEM!

So much for the "beautiful babes of Jupiter." They stand even less chance of appearing from the evolutionary morass than I do of winning £75,000 in the football pools three times in succession.

A highly-fascinating field of speculation opens itself. We can reasonably follow up by asking just what variety of BEM?

When you come to think of it, the human form (and many of the other vertebrates, also) is not perhaps ideally designed for survival in primitive circumstances. There's a brain perched on top -- armoured by bone, admittedly, but in an excellent position

for being knocked off by hostile action. Intakes for food and air follow a long, vulnerable path. The habit of walking upright that has come about during the past half million years admittedly releases the hands for various purposes but reduces speed of travel because four legs (provided size, strength and other factors be more or less equal) can run faster than two.

Man has achieved ascendancy over beasts of the field by reason of his superior brain-power and his wonderful, sensitive hands. Those hands can use weapons and instruments. They can control a 600-ton express train or fit an almost microscopic screw; they can bend iron bars or perform surgical operations on a nerve the thickness of a hair. But they can grasp only one control rod, spanner or scapel at once.

Then take the tentacled BEM -- something after the style of an intelligent, air-breathing octopus, for instance. (We're all SF fans here and unlikely to be squeamish). Vital components are tucked away in a neat, compact, almost spherical body, with any desired unumber of limbs radiating therefrom. "Bug-eye's" arms and legs are interchangeable -- he is, indeed, multi-dextrous instead of merely ambidextrous. If he wants to run he uses the lot -- backwards as easily as forwards. If he wishes to use four hammers at the same time to knock in four nails he does so. He can look after five times as many machines or electrical controls as a human being.

So don't be hard on "Bug-eye." He's my pal.

-!!!!!!!-

Well, I've enjoyed this temporary occupancy of the soapbox, and I hope you have, too, even though the discourse has rambled rather. Any apparent flippancy is merely sugar on the pill of a very important challenge. SF is a matter to be taken seriously if we want it to survive in a proper form. Already it's begining to accumulate a list of stories that are classics in their own right. As the years roll by I'm confident we'll see more and more of them -- but only if every Science-Fiction enthusiast plays his or her part in demanding imaginative stories with suitable emphasis on the "science" part of the description.

Jon J. Deegan.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE SOCIETY'S NEW POSTAL ADDRESS IS AS FOLLOWS :-

THE LIVERPOOL SCIENCE-FICTION SOCIETY,

C/o N.L. Shorrocks,
12 A RUMFORD PLACE,
LIVERPOOL 3.

MEETINGS ARE STILL HELD EVERY MONDAY NIGHT AT 7 PM.,
AT THE 'STORK' HOTEL, QUEEN'S SQUARE, LIVERPOOL 1.

RECEIVED FROM:

SIDGWICK AND JACKSON -- THE MAN WHO SOLD THE MOON
256 pages, and
priced at 9s.6d.

by
ROBERT A. HEINLEIN

This book, the first in Heinlein's Future History series, was first published in America by Shasta Publishers in 1950. The English edition is short a few pages but all the material is still present in the form of:

Introduction by J.W.Campbell, Jr. Preface by Robert A. Heinlein.
Life-Line, a short story which appeared in the August 1939 Astounding.
"Let There Be Light", short story.
The Roads Must Roll, a novelle from the June 1940 Astounding.
Blowups Happen, a novelle from the September 1940 Astounding.
The Man Who Sold The Moon, a short novel.
Requiem, a short story from the January 1940 Astounding.

Life-Line is a tale about a certain Dr. Pinero who discovers a way of foretelling death dates, including his own. And the fight he has with the Insurance Companies who find themselves in a rather unstable position because of his invention.

"Let There Be Light" deals with a cheap form of light and the business question of whether it should be for all men or for a certain group of men.

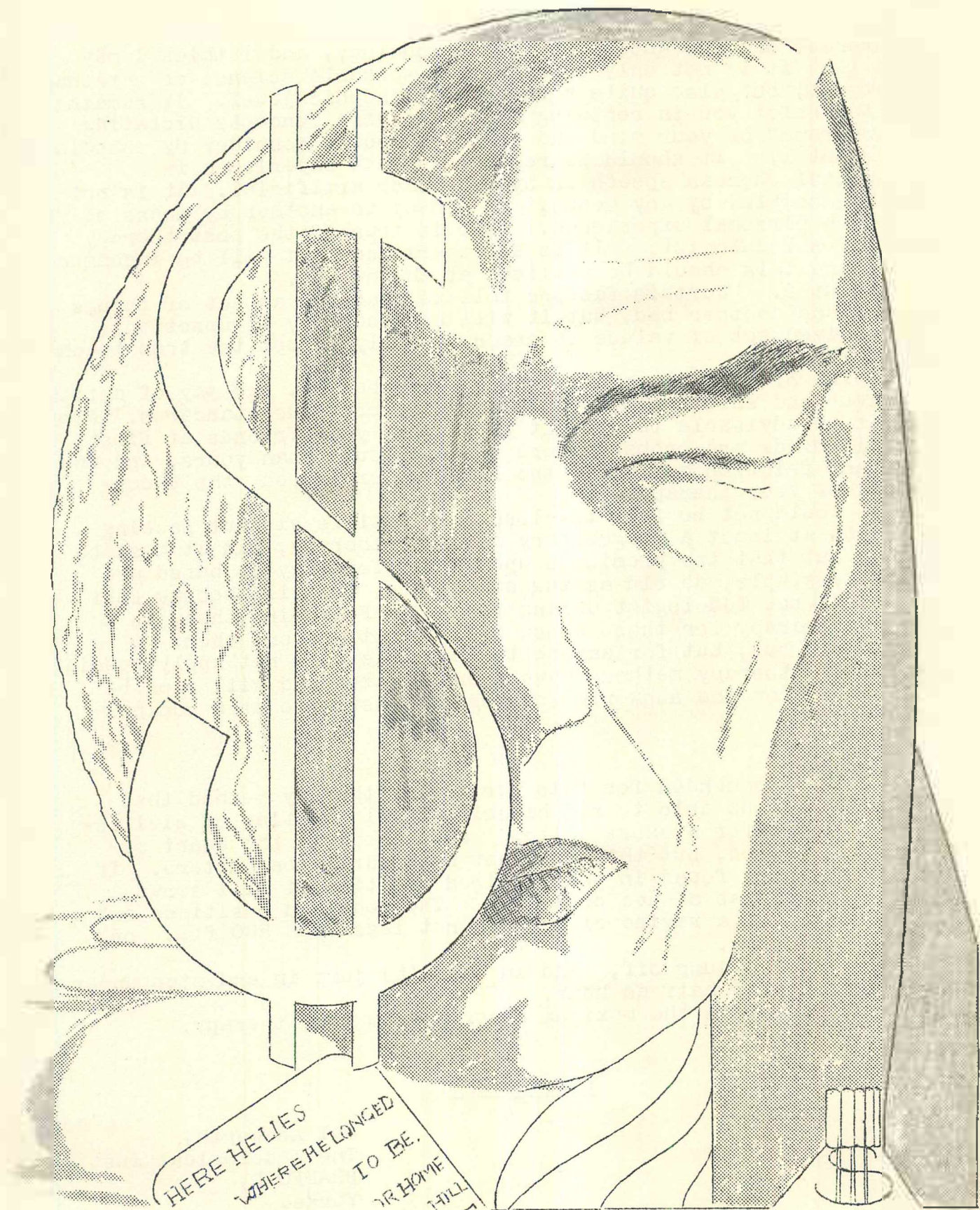
The Roads Must Roll; this is a story about the rolling roads of America in the year 1975 and the technicians who keep the roads moving. But they run into trouble when there is a revolt of certain technicians who try to stop the moving strips.

Blowups Happen tells of the consequences that can easily happen when there is a mistake in the operation of an atomic power plant.

All the above stories are good, but the best is still to come in the title story, The Man Who Sold The Moon. This is an original 30,000 word story which tells in terse and exciting manner the dream of a hard-headed business man who is determined that man shall reach the Moon. It is well worth paying the price of the book for this single story which is one of the most realistic big business tales it has been my pleasure to read. Although at least three of these tales deal with business I must point out that the science fiction element is still strong in all of them. This is one of the best books to be published over here for a long time and deserves best-seller status, especially if we are to see the other four books which make up the complete Future History series.

The last story in the book, Requiem, deals with Harriman, the man who sold the Moon, and his attempt to reach the Moon himself before he dies.

It appears that Messrs. Sidgwick and Jackson cannot go wrong in selecting some of the finest science-fiction books to appear between hard covers. I don't know who their SF editor is, but he must certainly be congratulated upon his selections.



HERE HE LIES
WHERE HE LONGED
TO BE.
IN HOME
HILL

THE MAN WHO SOLD THE MOON

TODOLOGY, contd. from page 35

assurances and guarantees regarding Todology, and I think I may claim that it is not only an extremely workable science of personal adjustment, but also quite a unique philosophic jewel. It remains only to assist you in removing a few timeworn concepts dictating the programme of your mind and to leave you to consider my postulates.

Point 1. It should be remembered that experience is fundamental whereas speech is synthetic or artificial. It is not always possible, by any means, to convey to another by means of speech, a personal experience. This is true of the post therapy state of a Todologist. It is an experience that will be incommunicable and this should be realised at the outset.

Point 2. Certain factors tell us that one aspect of things is good and another bad, but it will be necessary to upset this preconceived set of values in order to fully accept the true teaching of Todology.

Point 3. Todology as a science and belief, and way of action is unique and should not be judged by any previous standards. Nor will it be advisable to attempt to convert your friends at first, as their minds are probably more concept-bound than yours, and the resultant friction may delay the efficacy, or indeed the undertaking, of your therapy.

It would not be fair to close this article without passing on to you at least a fragmentary guide to therapy, and it must be pointed out that the premisses upon which Todology is based are extremely simple, as old as the human race, and will become self evident to the Todologist during therapy. Following, then, is a guide to therapy for those whose ties do not prevent them carrying it out, but for anyone to whom this does not apply, special alternative therapy methods have been prepared and will soon be obtainable from the Ashworth Todological Institute at a nominal cost.

THERAPY

It is recommended for this particular therapy method that the Todologist be able to rid himself of all the ties of civilisation at least for a short while. Some abode in the heart of nature is advised, but this need not necessarily be austere. If a mansion can be found in the required position it will serve equally as well as a cave or a hut. The required positions are
a) At the top of a ravine of a depth not less than 500 ft., or,
b) Beside a river.

In case (a) jump off, and in case (b) jump in and stop under for not less than half an hour.

May you obtain the maximum benefit from your therapy.

THE END.

Mal Ashworth,
The Todological Inst.,
BRADFORD,
Yorks.

HERE THERE

with DAVE GARDNER

OUR foolscap size oneshot, SYMPOSIUM ON SEX AND SADISM IN CURRENT SCIENCE-FICTION, was a complete sell-out. It sold so well that I have had a stack of letters to write to fans who were unable to obtain a copy - either at the May LONCON or by writing to me at home. In view of the fact that so many people seem interested in it, and that the 85 copies we turned off did not go anywhere towards meeting the demand, my co-editors have agreed that we should run the contents in SPACE DIVERSIONS. But as the pages numbered 40 in the original edition it means that we won't be able to reprint the whole issue at one printing. Therefore, we propose to reprint one or two of the articles at a time, commencing with the next issue of S.D. Don MacKay, who did the art work for the oneshot, has kindly offered to reproduce his illustrations for quarto production, and even if you do not go for the reading material the articles will be well worth watching out for just to catch the illos.

For a long time now Norman Shorrocks and I have considered that one of the most effective covers that could be used on a Science-Fiction magazine would be one with a preponderance of black in the make-up, with the magazine title in a yellow or white. We were flattered to see

our views upheld when Fantastic came out with a black cover, yellow title, etc., the etc, however, also includes story titles and a small illustration set in the top left hand corner; still, in the main we didn't do too badly.

Talking about covers brings me to one of the worst I have ever seen on any s-f mag, including some of our pocket books. The cover in question is the back cover on the Oct. issue of S-F+, executed by my pet aversion, Paul. The theme is supposed to depict the Elements of Science-Fiction, and I have never seen anything so vile in all my life. The editor and publisher both seem to think that they have secured a masterpiece of art work that will have fans swooning with joy. The thing is balderdash (original expression deleted). As with all Paul illustrations it dates back to the 1930's or beyond. The man doesn't seem to have adapted himself to modern art technique -- but relies on the Fame (?) he gained in the afore-mentioned era to carry him through today's markets. It's my opinion that Mr Paul should be dropped -- like a shot! I can only see that he does more harm than good to the s-f field in general; his work gives me the spine-crawling sensation that s-f is just as much crap as many people seem to think it is: Poor, infantile hack!

Looky likey a number of our dealers in second-hand American S-F magazines are going to have their noses out of joint what with the flood of reprinting that is now flowing off the presses, notably of Thorpe and Porter. It makes me wonder just whether my collection will continue to decrease in value due to the reprint angle, or whether it will cause a flood of requests from new readers to the field for back copies of such master-mags as AmS and FA. I have m'doubts!

Ted Carnell tells me that New Worlds 22 should be out in the near future, if not already out by the time this sees publication. NW23 will be produced by a new printer, and was, in fact in the process of being printed before the work started on 22. Printing and producing difficulties have hit more than us!

The cover on Nebula 6, which appeals to me greatly, seems to strike a cord as a Robert Gibson Jones painting...even the cover-name, G.H. Irwin lends itself to that supposition. I'll be sorry to see the present Authentic cover scheme come to an end with issue 43. This series has been one of the highlights of the past few months.

After reading the rave reviews given to Bob Tucker's, The Long Loud Silence, I was bitterly dissatisfied when I came to read it, and could only console myself with the knowledge that I'd got the 2/- edition instead of the hard cover vol. For my money, Take-Off had it licked into a cocked hat.

Any of you Stateside readers know what's happened to John D. McDonald of late? He has been remarkably quiet in Gold Medal & the detective pulps as well as in Science-fiction.

.....IN MEMORIAM.....
WHITE HORSE
no more,
same night
GLOBE TAVERN,
HATTON GARDEN,
CHANCERY LANE Stn.,
Near GAMAGES.

Vargo Statten's S-F Mag due out on the 14th January, 1954. Large size, about 64 pages, with a cover that churns your stomach. One bright note about it, 'tho', I see that Ted Tubb has a serial running in it.

Willing to take a bet that our J.T.M. Intosh heads the Mag of Fantasy and Science-Fiction's popularity poll with his famous One In Three Hundred. The Jan issue of the same magazine runs his One In A Thousand, a sequel to the above story that was written at the earnest request of the two editors after seeing the fine reception the first one gained for James.

((Just come to the conclusion that this'll be the last time you'll ever see Here and There in column form. Too much labour is involved on the part of the typist!))

A communication received received from the Slan Shack informs us that the World Convention in 1954 will be held at The Sir Francis Drake Hotel in the city of SAN FRANCISCO.

And that's all for this ish except to say that any news for Here and There should be sent to me at: 63, Island Road, Liverpool, 19.

Make it a date for number eight!

And best wishes for Christmas and the New Year,

Dave Gardner.

THERE ARE ORIGINAL STORIES BY
AUTHORS INCLUDING

ERIC FRANK RUSSELL
WILLIAM F. TEMPLE
J. T. M'INTOSH
E. C. TUBB
F. G. RAYER
ROSS ROCKLYNNE
L. MAJOR REYNOLDS
SYDNEY J. BOUNDS
E. R. JAMES
A. BERTRAM CHANDLER

AND A HOST OF NEW WRITERS,

PLUS

FAN ARTICLES BY

Forrest J. Ackerman
Kenneth F. Slater
Walter A. Willis
Tony C. Thorne

IN EVERY EDITION OF

NEBULA
Science Fiction

* THE IMMORTAL SAUCER

IT WAS after reading Arnold and Palmer's COMING OF THE SAUCERS that I appointed myself Britain's No.1 Saucer Investigator. It was after interviewing George on my first assignment that I relieved myself of the appointment and now, if a flying saucer landed in the front garden I wouldn't do more than sneer at it through the window...

They warned me that George wasn't very bright when I first made enquiries in the village, and I might have left it at that only they also admitted that M'Ginty confirmed George's story, and M'Ginty was as sharp a lad as you'd find for miles around. The very next morning I interviewed George while he was digging on his allotment.

"They tell me you saw a queer thing flying through the air across here, last week, George."

"Ar!" he said.

"Could you describe how it travelled?" I asked.

"Ar!" he cried. "Come over M'Ginty's roof it did like a shell out of a gun, right acrorst 'ere --" and he swept his arms in a wide arc almost overhead.

"What did it look like?" I enquired, scribbling away for dear life.

"What did 'er look like?" echoed George as though puzzled that anyone should want to know such a thing. "Well, 'er looked like a... you know... 'er were round and pointy in the middle and 'er 'ad a round bit on the top like thiccy --" and his hands described a cone, with a small half-circle superimposed on it.

This was exciting news. It bore out all that Messrs. Arnold & Palmer had recorded about the prevailing shape of the saucers. "How was it travelling?" I asked.

George looked blank.

"I mean, was it sailing smoothly or did it wobble or spin, or what?"

"Ar!!" said George, and stopped. Then he had a sudden inspiration and started again: "Ar! Rare thirsty weather, ain't it?"

This seemed a particularly stupid observation since it was a cold, wet October day, but just to humour him I offered him a cup from the flask of tea with which I was provided. He was by no means as grateful as could be but after a while he went on.

"Well, us can but try. This yer -- 'er come wirry wirry wirry over the top of ol' M'Ginty's cottage, a-spinning like a teetotalorum and a-wobblin from side to side."

I was writing feverishly. "How high?"

"I tell yer," he said irritably, "'er come over the top of M'Gin--"

"Yes, yes," I broke in, "but at what height? For instance, was it above the clouds, or below them?"

* Eds. Note: This might mean something to someone ?

"Below 'em, a course, " he grunted. "Or I couldn't 'a' seed 'un!"

I made some swift calculations ... Height less than five hundred feet... direction due N-W... "About how fast would you say it was travelling?"

George scratched his chin. "Well, 'er got from M'Ginty's cottage down into that 'ere quarry while I wore a 'oldin' me 'at on."

"Holding your hat on?" I exclaimed. "Why was that?"

"Else 'er'd a follow'd tother, I reckons," he explained. "Rare wind, it were."

This was something new, a happenstance which neither Arnold nor Palmer had come across. I was elated and wrote swiftly in my notebook, "Passing of Saucer created considerable atmospheric disturbance." Another thought struck me.

"Did you observe any ports, George?"

"Ports? Wot be they?"

"Portholes," I amplified. "Holes round the circumference you know."

"Oh, ar! Middlin' full of 'oles she wore. Ol M'Gin--"

"Quite!" I interrupted. I intended interviewing Mr. M'Ginty later and was not at the moment interested in him.

"Were there any signs of disintegration....I mean, did you see any lumps falling off it?"

George pondered. "Can't say as I did," he admitted at last. "Though there might 'a' bin. 'Er were in a shockin' bad state. As I tol' 'ol M'Ginty arterwards, it wore a wonder someone didn't get 'urt...."

"Very!" I exclaimed, making the last few notes. "Now, have I got all this down correctly?" An I read it back to him.

"Don't unnerstand 'arf of it," he commented, "but it sounds near enough. Ony you ain't put in the bit about me an' M'Ginty 'avin' a row over it."

"A row?" I was only interested out of politeness.

"Ar! 'E wanted me to chase arter 'er. Me, full o' roomaticks and 'im a young un!"

"What point was there in chasing it, anyway?" I asked.

"M'Ginty reckons I might 'a' caught 'er afore 'er fell in the ol' quarry. So I might, an' I might a fell in mesel', too. Not likely!"

A sudden thrill ran through me. "You mean, it actually LANDED in the quarry?" I gasped. This was incredible luck, to find a saucer on the ground!

"Course 'er did. You can see un on thickey side o' the pond." He led me to the edge of the quarry and pointed downward. I stared at the object indicated, and a cold, numbing shock displaced my exultation.

"But that's onlyonly a.... BIN LID!"

"Ar! Tha's right," said George. "Gale lifted 'er clean off ol' M'Ginty's dustbin. 'E worn 'arf wild!"

Paul Enever.

SCIENCE TIT-BITS

by

Lewis Conway

ROCKETS VERSUS METEORIODS

ROCKETS, used for the exploration of the atmosphere and possibly in the foreseeable future, for the crossing of interplanetary space, must run the risks of destruction through collision with meteor-forming particles. As it is now possible to send rockets into the upper atmosphere, where collisions may occur, it is of some importance to survey the chances of such collisions.

A meteor, or more probably a 'shooting star', occurs when a solid particle, or meteoroid, weighing upwards from a few milligrams, enters the atmosphere with a velocity which may be anything from 20 to 70 km/sec. When at these velocities an atmospheric atom or molecule collides with the meteoroid, a few atoms of the particle are chipped off and fly out with considerable kinetic energy, which through successive collisions with other atoms are transformed into both heat and light radiation. When collisions between the particle and atmospheric atoms become sufficiently frequent, the cylindrical cloud of hot gas formed around the path of the particle is observed as the 'meteor'. The great majority of meteors are first visible at heights between 100 and 115 km. How deeply they penetrate the atmosphere before being consumed varies with the mass of the particle; few, however, remain visible below 65 km.

At heights below 65 km. the chances of collisions between a meteoroid and a rocket are very small, for few meteoroids are present. Above the 85km. mark, however, a rocket is exposed to possible collision with the steady hail of particles. If a particle is checked abruptly by direct collision with the rocket, it will vaporise, and the resulting explosion may pierce the hull of the rocket, and very likely destroy it.

The earth's daily catch of particles producing meteors bright enough to be seen by the unaided eye is usually estimated as around 24,000,000. Counts of telescopic meteors too faint to be observed with the naked eye indicate that the total number of meteoroids impinging daily upon the atmosphere is much greater. The results of the Arizona Meteor Expedition (Harvard Observ. Ann. 1937 105 No.32) indicate that down to the ninth magnitude the daily total is about 10^9 (1,000,000,000). Even this figure, which does not include very faint meteors, is indicated as being too small, but it can be used for some enlightening calculations.

The total area of the Earth's atmosphere is about 5×10^{10} sq.km. If 10^9 meteors enter it each day, the frequency per square kilometer

is about two particles daily. Let us assume that the cross section of a typical rocket is 5 sq.m. Then on the average, one meteor will pass through a 'rocket-sized' area once in 10^5 days, or such a patch of atmosphere will be pierced by a meteor sometime during one day in each 300 years.

It is probable that the total number of meteoroids entering the atmosphere daily is at least a thousand times greater than 10^9 . Even so, at a daily rate of 10^{12} particles, a rocket-sized area will be pierced by a meteoroid only once in each 100 days. In as much as a rocket used for high-altitude soundings will be exposed to collision at the top of the atmosphere for only a short time, there is very little chance that such a rocket will be struck. Up until the present time, I know of no report which indicates that a test rocket has been pierced by a meteoroid, although such information may be 'classified'.

Rockets fired towards the moon will be travelling for some time. Assuming that the fuel capacity of a rocket limits its extra-atmospheric velocity to 1km/sec, a rocket travelling the shortest path would require nearly four and one-half days for the trip, the average distance being 384,000 km. It seems, therefore, that some appreciable fraction of the number of rockets shot towards the moon (4 per cent for the conditions assumed here) would be hit.

INTERPLANETARY travel constitutes the most hazardous journey for future rocket ships. Of all the planets, Venus comes the closest to the Earth, reaching a minimum distance of 42,000,000 km. If an interplanetary rocket travelled a mere kilometer per second in space, it would require nearly 500 days to reach Venus. While existing information on the space density of meteoroids is uncertain, within rather wide limits, it seems probable that a sizeable proportion of space ships would not survive exposure of several hundred days to the hazards of collision with meteoroids. By the time space ships are built, and the other details of interplanetary travel are settled, we may have a means of deflection or of dodging the oncoming particles. Certainly by then, more precise information should be available on the total number of particles striking the atmosphere daily, and how we may detect them with greater accuracy.

L.J. Conway.

"THESE THINGS ARE EXAGGERATED BECAUSE THEY MAKE INTERESTING READING THESE THINGS."

We read in Camber that some of us at the Loncon bribed a night porter with whiskey to let us have the keys to the roof of a certain London hotel. It appears that a party was held there, quite successfully too, until somebody started chucking empty bottles down one of the chimney stacks. Now we do confess to a party, and we do confess to finishing up on the roof, but we must decry the statement that we stooped so low as to offer a bribe, and protest against the statement of the dropped bottles -- paper gliders, maybe, but bottles -- never. Let the writer of those statements be informed that there is money back on bottles, even whiskey bottles when there's a rag and bones cart in the offing. No, no dropped bottles, no slipped bribes, just a party, one which the Camber writer did not attend, even 'though an invitation had been extended.

(P.S. Not unless some irresponsible Manchester character dropped one!)

FROM THE FRONT OF BEYOND

GOD KNOWS WHAT HE - or it - was, or what black hell spewed forth the creature that aged me thirty years in a night, took so much of my life from me. This I know, though, it exists nowhere now. No more....But let me tell you about it from the beginning.

He was a personable character. When I first saw him, it was at a lecture he delivered to a group of philosophy students in their last year at the University. I was very interested in some points he brought up in his argument on ontology, concerning which he had many, what seemed to me then, novel approaches. For this reason I felt a desire to hear more of his views, and after his provocative talk was over, I waited until the hall had emptied and only he remained, assembling his papers. I can remember now, quite clearly, when I think back, that I had in mind the idea of drawing him out on what was obviously his hobby horse. How ironical this thought turned out to be was revealed to me later.

He smiled engagingly at me as I went up to him, and as though he had anticipated my object, he asked me what further knowledge I sought. I felt that this was an opening for me and we were very soon engaged in warm debate.

The hour, however, was now quite late, and he courteously suggested that we proceed to his rooms where we might talk in comfort and in pleasanter surroundings. I acquiesced and we traversed the short distance through the quiet streets in a few minutes.

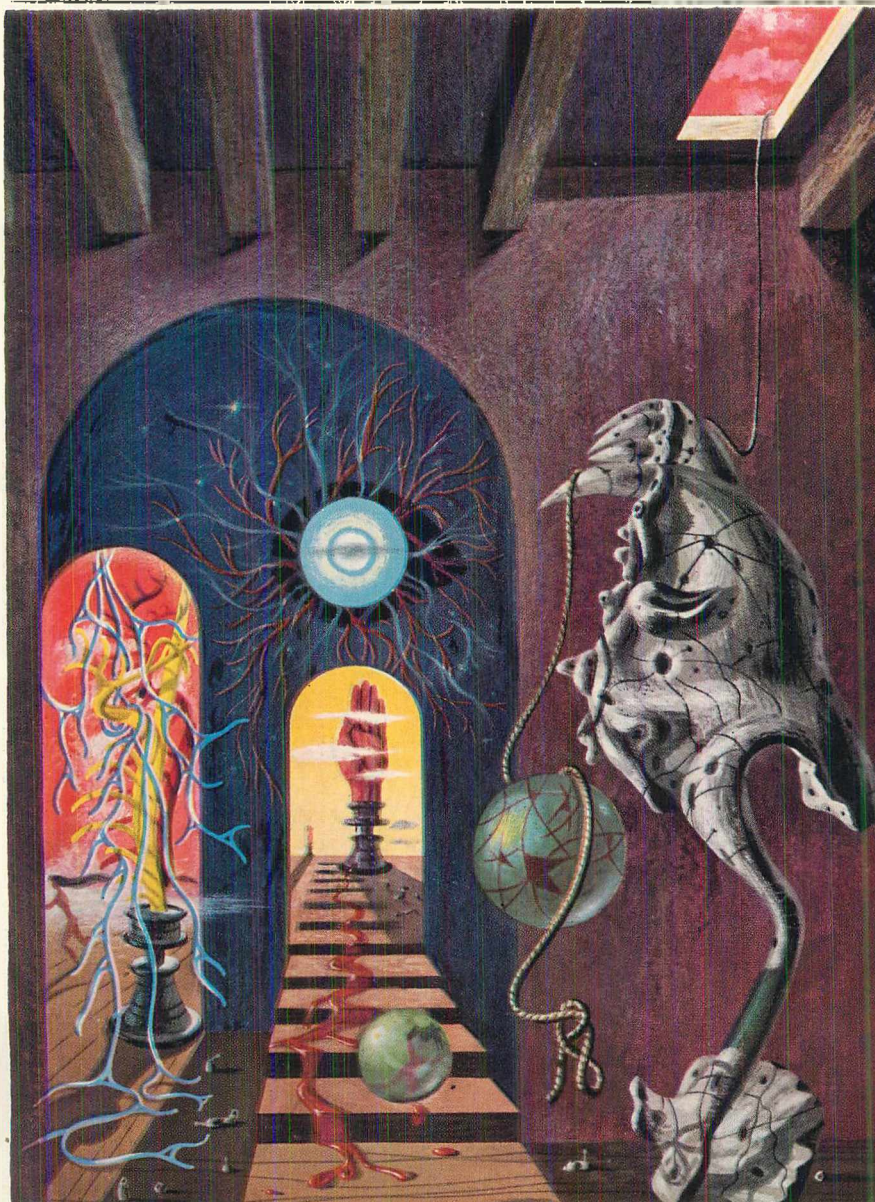
Here, we became immersed in fluent discussion once more, or rather he did, as I soon found I was doing most or all of the listening! My own source of talk seemed to have dried up, and no ideas seemed to arise in my mind. Indeed, as time went on, I found myself growing somewhat weary, all the brilliant conceptions and the profusion of my ideas seemed to vanish as he went on. At first I thought it was due merely to the lateness of the hour and my resultant tiredness, and I grew listless and inattentive until I felt I must pardon myself somehow and take my leave. But I could not interrupt his flow of loquaciousness without appearing unpardonably rude and abrupt, so I waited until a convenient pause should arise, when I might suggest we continue our conversation at some future time. But his talk went on in an uninterrupted flow at a still dynamic pitch, and never did he falter; rather did his fluency and vitality appear oddly to increase in inverse proportion to my wilting faculties under the stream of his inexhaustible volubility.

I had long before lost the thread of his dissertation and I felt my now dazed mind slowly losing its grip on the reality around me. In a fog of confusion, I struggled to bring myself to my senses but I was bemused - almost in a trance. My weakened will almost a slave to my companion's.

How long this had been going on and how much longer it might have continued, I had no idea, but suddenly, from nowhere it seemed, a stray thought inserted itself into my brain. It may have been

caused by some external noise or disturbance which intruded itself into my subconscious and then rose to full awareness with other things which I found myself suddenly recalling. But those other things! I felt them as dimly remembered and deeply repressed inhibitions, unrealised hopes, desire, fears, sordid little trifles of which no-one is ever fully aware - normally. But now they were all bubbling up to the surface in a horrible mad turmoil.

Then like a searing vision, through my mental stupor, I saw the whole horrible process. My subconscious was rising up to full consciousness, but as had happened earlier in the night, when I first felt my conscious thoughts vanishing, these too were being sapped from me in some peculiar fashion. What was happening to me? Was I going mad? In a panic of sudden desperation, as a chilling fear engulfed me, I struggled to regain full control of myself. I tried to recall the external disturbance which had first brought me to realisation of what was happening. I fixed my mind with all the tenacity I could muster on this, and drawing on a



reserve of will I had not believed existed, I rose up with the wave of the subconscious to surface on a sea of appalling horror. With the momentum of this and my slowly increasing will, I lurched towards the man seated in the chair facing me, with not a notion in my mind what to do. He looked up at me, startled. The next minute I was sinking my teeth savagely in his throat, exercising every ounce of strength that was in my jaws.

The creature gave a howl, horrible to hear but did not struggle; instead, there beat upon my senses, numbing them with concentrated horror, images and symbols from the cesspools of a diseased mind. Blood swept in turbid waves round my feet, and rose, swiftly

covering my body and face. I was under a sky of yellow, chasing a naked woman, with hideous thoughts in my head, across a nightmare landscape. An enormous red hand rose in front of me oozing blood from every pore. I reeled back in terror and fell into a nauseous darkness wherein I perceived forms disgusting to behold, rotting grey shapes of putrefaction too abominable for the light of day. A pale orb of blue sailed over me like an obscene eye, with weaving filaments lashing the air in a tempest of fury. A living noose flung itself at me and I recoiled instinctively, brushing against two other globes which shrank as I looked at them. I climbed a rope of gold to the stars, it frayed, broke, and I was plunging into an abyss of blackness. The universe exploded with a silent crash, all red; spidery thought-vines reached out with searching tendrils, blindly, I fought them, bit - and suddenly I was free. My adversary's struggles had ceased and I fainted at his feet.

When I came round I do not know, but when I did I considered the awful thing I had done. It was obvious that this monster in man's shape was responsible for my previous mental lassitude, followed by the stealing of my subconscious, for the sensation had ceased instantly he was assaulted. But why had I attacked him? What had prompted me to such unwonted savagery? Perhaps it was some fragment of information which the thing had released unwittingly in its sudden awareness of my regained power. Perhaps it was some deep seated knowledge of my own, brought to the surface by the will to survive. I shall never know for certain.

But I shall never be sorry I had my teeth filled with silver.

John D. Roles.

(The coloured illustration for the above story is, of course, the cover illustration for the July, 1953, 1st edition of Horace Gold's fantasy magazine BEYOND. There's a bit of a story behind its use in Space Diversions, and, whether you want to know it or not, here it is. Some months after Beyond first appeared we received about 200 copies of the cover from a certain W. Willis sans message of any sort. Now being awake that day, we realised that if he just wanted us to have a look at it, then one copy would have done just as well as the 200 -- they all looked the same. We came to the conclusion that the intention must be for us to send them out with SD as a sort of advert for Beyond, but alas! they were months late and we could see from the way production was heading that it would be many many more months later before they saw the interior of SD. Only one thing to do: write a story around the cover, use that story in SD and illustrate the story with Gold's cover. Which we now do. But, as we were forced to cut the heading and the line-up blurb from the illo., we feel we owe our readers, including Mr. Gold, an explanation ...and there it is.....right above.) ADVERT FOR BEYOND, NOT John Roles.

WANTED -- American editions of GOLD MEDAL POCKET BOOKS :--

124: J.D.MacDonald's The Brass Cupcake, and 164: Murder for the Bride.

125: G.Schweiter's The Obsessed. 183: L.Baker's...And Be My Love.

202: W.H.Fielding's The Unpossessed.

GOLD MEDAL GIANTS: J.Sheridan's Thunderclap. T. Pratt's Handsome.

K. Thomas's The Devil's Mistress.

RED SEAL BOOKS: R.Gehman's Each Life To Live. N.Morgan's City of Women.

Write to.....

Dave Gardner, 63, Island Road, Liverpool, 19.

THE SHAVER SAGA

G. S. DAVIES

I SUPPOSE AS good a start as any is for me to give you a few details concerning Mr. Richard Sharpe Shaver himself before I pass to his stories. Here then, are the details I have to hand:

His surname is supposed to have been taken from a German township called Shavertown, but don't get the idea from that that he is of German descent; far from it, or should I say anything but German? According to Shaver, he is of English, Scots, French and Indian extraction. He is in the region of 43 years of age, has brown hair and green eyes and is 5' 11" in height, and he likes to have a couple of cats and dogs around the house. Finally, his favourite authors are: E.R. Eddison, James Cabell, and Arthur Machen.

Well, I think that covers the personal details concerning Mr. Shaver, and now let's get around to his work.

The birth of the Shaver Mystery was behind the scenes at the Ziff-Davis Publishing House in September, 1943, although the first portion of what was to prove to be one of the biggest attractions in Science Fiction did not appear in print until January, 1944. In that month the Shaver Alphabet was published, and according to Ray Palmer, the editor of Amazing Stories, "It brought in replies almost immediately from readers who had dabbled around with the Alphabet and discovered that it worked amazingly well in many languages, and especially in languages more ancient."

(I reproduce the Alphabet and a few comments for reader information. The Alphabet should be taken phonetically rather than literally, and does not work with words that are 'modern' or 'coined'. An example of useage is obtained from the example word, ACID. A - animal; C - see; I - I; D - disintergrate. Animal see I disintegrate, which is a quite reasonable description of the word acid; serving as a warning word and meaning literally the same as poison -- it warned animal life of its power to harm by disintegrating.

A - Animal (used AN for short). B - Be (to exist--often command). C - See. D - (also used DE) Disintegrant energy; Detrimental (most important symbol in language. E - Energy (an all concept, inc motion). F - Fecund (use FE as in female - fecund man). G - Generate (used GEN). H - Human (some doubt on this one). I - Self; Ego (same as our I). J - (see G) (same as generate). K - Kinetic force (force of motion). L - Life. M - Man. N - Child; Spore Seed (as ninny). O - Orifice (a source concept). P - Power. Q - Quest (as question). R - (used as AR) Horror (symbol of dangerous quantity of dis force in the object). S - (SIS) (An important symbol of the sun). T - (Used as TE) (the most important symbol; origin of the cross symbol) - Integration; Force of growth (the intake of T is cause of gravity; the force is T;

tic meant science of growth; remains as credit word. U - You. V - Vital (used as VI) (the stuff Messmer calls animal magnetism; sex appeal). W - Will. X - Conflict (crossed force line). Z - Zero (a quantity of energy of T neutralized by an equal quantity of D).

Examples and Alphabet reproduced from an original article by Richard S. Shaver and Raymond A. Palmer.)

Encouraged by the response to his work on the Alphabet, Shaver started working on a story concerning the ancient races who had inhabited this Earth of ours some twelve or even fifty thousand years ago, and who had used this Alphabet as a working base for their language. This story which saw publication in the March 1945 issue of Amazing Stories was a short novel of some 36,000 words in length. Editor Palmer gave it the title 'I Remember Lemuria', (although Shaver had called it 'Warning To Future Man') because at that time Palmer refused to believe that the story was true and he preferred to attribute it to 'racial memory'.

Some time later Palmer stated that he was convinced that these stories about the caverns under Earth and the Elder Races of Earth were the truth, and that Shaver was only embodying the facts in a form of fiction - Science-Fiction - so that he could get the truth concerning the life beneath the Earth's crust across to the reading public. These were the Shaver Mystery stories.

The bare facts of the Mystery are concerned with caves many miles beneath the surface of the Earth; the people who had once inhabited Earth and built those caves; and the people who now dwell in them. These are the essentialities of the Mystery stories.

Out of 62 Shaver stories that I have listed in my work on this article, I count 21 of them as falling under the heading of the Mystery. The other 41 are either pure Fantasy or else straight Science-Fiction, neither type bearing any relationship to the Mystery. I am not counting any of the material that appeared in the Shaver Mystery Club Magazine as I have only eight of the issues in my collection - and as I want them all before I start reading them - the contents are, in fact, a complete Mystery to me.

Two more sidelines of interest in connection with this article: 1/ Shaver had 21 front covers devoted to illustrating his work in either Amazing Stories or Fantastic Adventures between March 1945, and January 1950.

2/ The sales of the Ziff-Davis magazine, Amazing Stories, increased by 50,000 within a few months of 'I REMEMBER LEMURIA' appearing, and according to Ray Palmer there were over 30,000 letters received from readers who agreed with Shaver's ideas. The number of letters from readers who disagreed with him are, however, not available to your writer.

The idea behind the Mystery, or 'Hoax' as it was termed by a large number of fan is as follows:--

Many thousands of years ago this world was inhabited by two races known as the Titans and the Atlans who lived in immense underground cities. They were far more advanced than the people of today, both in the arts and in the sciences. It was a well-known fact to the scientists of their day that when a sun started to age, and the pure carbon outer crust burnt through, that the inner materials were impure. And that instead of completely beneficial rays being received here on Earth, Dis, or detrimental radioactives, were

deposited in the waters and on the land of the planet. These radioactive materials caused the inhabitants to age and die, when once they had been immortal. (A comparatively modern comparison can be drawn from the cases of the factory girls who painted radium figures and fingers on clocks with brushes. They 'tipped' the brushes with their tongues to get the fine points to do the delicate work. These girls developed poisoning which in a few short months made them appear hideously old - hags - with all the infirmities of advanced age.)

Many of the Titans and Atlans who had not been so affected by the Dis fled from Earth and its dangerous sun, out into space in search of a new world with either a young sun (it is the old suns which give out the detrimental radioactives) or a world without a sun in dark space where no detrimental forces held sway. Another factor instrumental in their leaving Earth was that besides the shortening of the human life span the Dis also effected the mental capacities of those who fell victim to the radioactive poison, and caused racial madness. Those unfortunates who were already effected in such a manner were left behind when the main force of Titans and Atlans took to space. Since the two races had built their cities underground and their vast civilisation was immovable, all their machines and cities were left intact. Thus, the abandonderos, taking refuge in them from the elements, inherited many wonderful things, which, because of their mental state and destructive thinking processes, they turned to destructive purposes.

The abandonderos mentioned above can be divided into two groups,

- 1/ The deros, or detrimental robots who are evil in intent, and,
- 2/ The teros, or intergrative robots who are good in intent.

The teros were those who were not already effected when the greater mass of the Titans and Atlans evacuated in space ships. As there were not sufficient ships to take the whole population only favoured groups were able to escape. The less fortunate or already diseased were abandoned - thus earning the description that Mr. Shaver gave them of the 'abandonderos'.

These two forces are forever in combat, the teros, alas, being outnumbered by their evil thinking and doing counterparts, the deros; so that we find there are always far more unpleasant things in this world of ours than there are pleasant. For Shaver insists that all the trouble in the world today is caused by the actions of the cave-dwelling deros operating their ray machines in a mischievous and malicious manner and directing - or at least, influencing - the every-day acts of the surface dwellers.

These ray machines, which I have already mentioned as having been left behind by the evacuating Titans and Atlans, were at one time beneficial in use to the dwellers of the underworld and were used to enhance physical and emotional pleasures, to heal them when they were sick, and to help them in their every-day life. It appears that this ancient civilisation was built up on the use of ray machines which would take care of practically whatever was wished. (It appears to me, however, that the rays concerned with sexual pleasures far exceeded any other types used; or maybe it was thought by editor and author that if they insisted that the tales were true, then to hold the readers who scoffed at that statement they had to give a different form of mental stimulation - erotica.)

The abandoned deros maintained the use of the cavern stim ray machines to make their lives more enjoyable, but their mentalities crept to a new low level. They discovered that they no longer possessed the capabilities of repairing the ageing machines whose parts were becoming worn and contaminated by continual useage. Instead of giving forth beneficial stimuli, the forces which were now released were harmful and hastened the degradation of the human species. Not all succumbed, the teros proved themselves strong enough in will and mind to resist falling into the slovenly ways of their cavern bretheren, and these small bands of humans kept the machines at their disposal in a reasonable state of repair, so that they carried out the functions that the designers had intended them to perform. Besides giving forth radioactive poisonous rays the sun also dispensed beneficial rays that the cavern dwellers did not have access to, due to being beneath miles of solid rock which the rays could not penetrate. The teros, however, by keeping their machines under repair were able to doctor themselves with substitute machine-health rays similar in character to the beneficial rays of the sun.

There is a point here that I should have mentioned some time back when writing about the abandonderos; it is one that should be cleared up otherwise there might be some awkward queries to be answered later on, mostly concerned with ground that has been covered once. The point is this: The surface people who now inhabit the Earth are the descendants of those abandonderos who were unable to gain access to the 'life-saving caverns' but were forced to roam the surface (producing the remains known as Neanderthal). Most of them died off, but others developed a resistance to the sun's death-rays and eventually managed to live almost as long, on the average, as the cavern people. We surface people have one slight advantage, the degree of insanity caused through the use of faulty machines is higher than that of the detrimental plus benifical sun rays of the sun. Or should I say that all surface dwellers, even though managing to build up a certain resistance to detrimental rays, developed a comparatively harmless type of madness and that all of us are slightly off our rockers, whilst the deros got a bad dose of insanity that warped them completely and turned them against every man?

However, the fact remains that the surface folk lost all memory of their forefathers except for vague legends of Atlantis, Lemuria, and the 'giants'; whilst they knew only of the deros as devils who tortured them in their sleep, brought misfortune, and fostered all the evil in mens minds.

Not all the Mystery stories were devoted entirely to the caves of Earth, some followed the adventures and the trials which the escaping Titans found on their routes through space in their search for a friendly sun or a dark world. Muton Mion, who was introduced in the first of the Shaver stories to see publication, 'I Remember Lemuria', plays an important part in this series, as does his wife, the cloven hoofed and silky tailed variform, Arl.

Granted this may not seem too bad, the theme is pure space opera. But unfortunately for both Palmer and Shaver they insisted that the stories were fact not fiction, and that the author had learnt all this through thought records from the caves. But how he managed to trace the trials and tribulations of the space-wandering escapees was food for the guns of many fen; especially as the Titans

were dead against revisiting Earth and the terrible radioactivity. Granted Mutan Mion was supposed to have returned for a few hours when the Nor forces were in conflict with Sathanas, the fallen God, but the attacking fan hardly thought that it was possible he left behind these purported thought records in the caverns. It would have served no purpose, for, as far as Mutan Mion knew, all the cavern dwellers were deros and if he had left the records there, they would have passed into the hands of the deros to serve no purpose whatsoever. One other major point added a false note to the whole (so claimed) truth, in that many of the happenings in outer space and on other worlds which are recorded here by Shaver, occurred after Mutan Mion had paid his return visit to Earth. The only others who touched down after that were slave-traders - deros of other worlds who bargained with the Earth-bound deros of our own caves for the services of the surface dwellers.

The answer to all this criticism had to be that Shaver was forced to use a certain amount of fiction plot to carry the facts of the truth in a fiction magazine.

But much as I enjoyed Shaver's yarns at the time of reading them I must confess that I am definitely opposed to the idea of them being true. But at the same time I must also confess that Shaver did tie in a lot of points that have been age-old mysteries and he had good explanations for them. The whole series of stories was built into a very smooth pattern which I enjoyed as space opera fiction. He was a clever writer, and still is for that matter, far far more painstaking over his work than I could ever be, and, I believe, far better read than I could hope to be.

But to get back to the main stream of the article; this insistence on the parts of Palmer and Shaver that the stories were true was in itself enough to turn away many would be readers; even today when the Mystery series has finished and a lot of the heated feeling directed against both men has blown away.

All along the line The Mystery came in for a lot of opposition from those fan who said that Shaver was defiling the good name of Science-Fiction, and who refused to be swayed by the mass of reports from readers who sent in letters supporting Shaver and offering information about the caves, an aspect which Palmer claimed to be conclusive evidence that Shaver was on the track of something big. Something of which many people had been aware for a long time but afraid to breathe a word about it for fear of ridicule or retribution at the hands of the deros. Shaver was getting away scott free of trouble and he seemed to be well supported so they came out with their bits of news and ideas. Chester S. Geier who part-wrote some of the Shaver stories started up the Shaver Mystery Club in Chicago, publishing a magazine which besides running readers' evidence columns also ran a serial by the Master himself, entitled MANDARK, the story of Christ, which, by the way, was based on the caves etc.

But Palmer and Shaver, by insisting that the stories were true and contained only a small part fiction, killed the goose that was laying them the golden eggs. Though the circulation of Amazing Stories increased tremendously there was intense fan activity directed against author, editor, and magazine. The Queens Sf Group and other fan organisations all over the States lent their support to the movement. At last, Palmer, not wishing to antagonise the fans any further brought the Mystery to a close. A fan himself until he took over the editorship of the Ziff-Davis group of magazines, he

realised that the whole affair was doing him more harm than good in the eyes of Science-Fiction followers. He had also drawn a lot of new readers to the fold (which after all is the editor's job, for he is primarily employed by the owners to increase the circulation), but at the same time, no magazine can stand a campaign of abuse launched at it. It depends on fans and casual readers for its existence, and Amazing above all other magazines had something to remember. It is the grand-daddy of all Sf mags. Fans had ensured its continued existence, and it was up to Amazing to keep its critics happy. Palmer had one final attempt whilst still with Amazing to see if it was worth while keeping up the Mystery series but his appeal for yes's or no's from the readers brought in very poor returns, as Palmer said, "It would take about three thousand or more eyes to bring the Mystery to the fore again." As he received a grand total of about 76 letters asking him to continue with it he gave up the whole revivalist attempt as a bad job. So the Mystery died from Amazing's pages from over use and over insistence that it was all true. The closure was thankfully welcomed by the majority of fans but Palmer was still beyond the pale as far as they were concerned. He attempted to solve their wounds by starting a fan column in his magazine and getting one of the more popular authors to run it for him, Roger Graham or Rog Phillips as he is known. But the damage had been done, the fan world was sick of him and the dropping of the Mystery caused a large number of his Shaver converts to drop the mag now that Shaver was out.

Actually to say that Shaver was out is rather a broad statement, because although the Mystery had seen the last of its limelight in Amazing Stories and Fantastic Adventures, his work continued to appear at spasmodic intervals both under his own name and under pseudonyms.

The situation changed again for the worst when Palmer announced that he had vacated his editor's chair at the Ziff-Davis establishment; it changed for the worse because the coming of Howard Browne as the editor saw a magazine which Browne himself confessed was directed to juvenile readers preparing them for the more advanced Science-Fiction turned out by Astounding and the like. (The above statement is not intended to refer to the present digest size Amazing and Fantastic which are well above juvenile level and offer slick Science-Fiction and Fantasy.)

Then surprise -- the outlook brightened -- Palmer announced that he now owned the Clark Publishing Company. He started off with a magazine called 'Fate' and followed that with the publication of his Science Fiction magazine, 'OTHER WORLDS'. This opened in grand style for the Shaver followers with a story by Shaver concerned with the caves and the Titans, it was 'The Fall Of Lemuria', plus a flambyant cover picturing one of the variform Titans, a beautiful half-woman, half-snake creature that I would be pleased to find in my back garden at any time, provided of course that the wife was missing!

That really saw the end of 1944 - 1950 Shaver Mystery era in any mag., (this article does not touch upon the recent few stories that are characterised by Mutton Mion et al), it seemed to be a last fling by Palmer to put it over on the fans again, for subsequent issues bore no trace of any more work of the same style. In all fairness, though, there is a rumour that must be mentioned, it seems

that most of the stories that appeared in the first issue of Other Worlds were not laid for, but that they had been held by Palmer for some time and that the various authors had given them to him in order to get his magazine started. Could be that this Shaver story was a left-over from the Amazing files that Palmer had put to one side to use before the Mystery crashed, and that he used it as a filler for the novelette gap. Anyway, let's give him the benefit of the doubts and say that it pleased some and not others.

Some time back in Other Worlds, Palmer again brought up the subject of Shaver, confessing as he did so that a lot of the Mystery yarns had been touched up at his request and against Shaver's wishes. He ran a poll, and from the results of this it became evident that Shaver himself was not unpopular, some of the stories he had written under his various pseudonyms had proved to be very popular, it was only the Mystery that had got(ten) the fan backs up. If the caves were never brought back into prominence the readers had no objection to seeing the name Shaver on the contents page of the mag., and proving that he could write straight sf along with the best of them.

About 50 per cent. of Shaver's tales that appeared in Amazing Stories and Fantastic Adventures during the years 1948 to 1950 have no bearing on the Mystery, the greater part of the non-Mystery stories appearing the 1948-50 run. These were straight sf and pure fantasy, as evidenced by the title of one that appeared in the March 1947 Fantastic Adventures whilst the 'Hoax' was still going on, it was a fantasy alright and called the 'Princes and her Pig', fantasy because it was written almost as a fairy story for six year olds and surely that type of fiction is the fore-runner of fantasy as we refer to it today in our own select groups of Sf fan.

Some time back in 1948 we received at the Science Fantasy Service offices in Victoria Street, a leaflet put out by the Aldebaran Press. This leaflet was concerned with the publishing of hard cover books by Richard Shaver and other writers who were interested in the caverns. As a matter of interest I have listed them, together with the prices they were going to charge:--

THE ELDER WORLD by Shaver.....six dollars.

GREY LORD OF DEATH by G. Archette...three dollars.(here I would be glad of any information concerning the story. I believe that I read it in magazine form in either Amazing or Fantastic, but on going through my files I can find no trace of it at all, maybe I sold it, but it's not there. Here is the blurb reprinted from the leaflet, 'A tremendously fascinating tale of a temple on a strange planet; where drifting on mist-encircled voids, centering in a grey swirl, the funneling heart of the mist-web deepened to a long tunnel as in some spider's den.

'The people of the planet worship the strange tunnel as the pathway to the land of the dead. Meloa T, taken alive by the 'way' when it opens, is followed by her lover, Verde Cire, agent of an organisation called the Blades.

'The three way conflict between the Blades and the clan of the Dal, led by the 'Green Wing' their young chieftainess - and the mysterious Grey Lord of Death, make up a book of fantasy as its best.'

Next comes:

THE MAGIC THAT WAS by Shaver.....two dollars fifty.

LETTERS TO SHAVER.....one dollar fifty.

SHAVER MYSTERY DIGEST.....one dollar fifty.

FOREVER IS TOO LONG by C.S.Geier....two dollars fifty.(from F.A.)

THE SHAVER OMNIBUS.....no price stated.
THE WIZARD KINGDOM by Morganstern.two dollars fifty.
WITCHES, HEROES AND MYSTERIES by P. Cagnini...three dollars
fifty.
MANDARK by Shaver.....four dollars.

You will have noted before that I said prices to be charged. The reason for that was because the books never came out. I heard from Forrest Ackerman when he came over here that the true facts behind it is that Shaver was hoping to start up his own publishing company to get his Mystery across to the general public. The firm was to be started on a payment in advance scheme, the most ordered book receiving preferance in publication. Unfortunately there was not a large response to the leaflet and the money sent in with orders was returned with letters of apology to the subscribers.

One Shaver book was published by the Venture Press(a Palmer enterprise?) of Evanston,Ill. It was priced at three dollars and was made up of two short novels from Amazing Stories, I Remember Lemuria and Return of Sathanas complete with original footnotes.

Incidently, Palmer brought out an issue of Amazing Stories that was devoted in its entirety to the Mystery, it was the June 1947 issue and all the fillers had a bearing on the Mystery as well as the stories. According to Palmer this was the first time that a magazine had been devoted to one author's work, others had run nearly a complete issue of one man's work, but never wholly.

Is the following passage taken from FATE a proof of Shaver's purported knowledge of the cavern science or is it just a coincidence? I don't want to stick my neck ou so I won't form an opinion -- just leave it to you to decide. Think it over carefully and consider whether there is some element of truth behind the fiction setting of Shaver's famous or, if you like, infamous, Mystery.

"On December 27th 1949, Albert Einstein came out with a new theory of gravitation and elector-magnetic fields. All I know is that Mr. Shaver(minus the mathematical formula) told me the same thing! And Mr. Shaver showed me stories published in 1945 in which he had propounded the things Mr. Einstein has now 'discovered'. For the record, I personally want to say that if any credit for a new and revolutionary theory of gravity goes to anybody it should go to Mr. Richard S. Shaver! Whatever else he is, he is of a scientific turn of mind -- and his stories, all of which I have read carefully, contain dozens of scientific precepts which have been confirmed by scientific research since they were written. I am terrifically impressed!"

Finally, have a look through some of the Reader's Coulumns in recent issue of Other Worlds and pre-digest size Amazings and see how the name Shaver keeps on cropping up, and also his brain-child - the Mystery -- there is still an awful lot of interest in it -- maybe it's not completely dead yet despite all that I have said.

I wonder!

G.S. Davies.

A Listing Of Magazine Titles and Dates In Which Stories By
 RICHARD S. SHAVER Appeared, Either Under
 his own name or a pseudonym. The
 'MYSTERY' stories are marked
 thus: %

- %Amazing Stories March 1945. Cover by Robert Gibson Jones.
 Vol.19. No.1. Illustrated by Robert Fuqua.
 I REMEMBER LEMURIA by Richard S Shaver. Short Novel: 36,100wds.
- %Amazing Stories June 1945. Cover by Robert Gibson Jones.
 Vol.19. No.2. Illustrated by Virgil Finlay.
 THOUGHT RECORDS OF LEMURIA by Richard S.Shaver.Novelette:25,000wds.
- %Amazing Stories Sept.1945. Cover by Robert Gibson Jones.
 Vol.19. No.3. Illustrated by Brady
 CAVE CITY OF HELL by Richard S.Shaver. Novelette:13,000words.
- %Amazing Stories Dec. 1945. Cover by Robert Gibson Jones.
 Vol.19. No.4. Illustrated by Julian S.Krupa.
 QUEST OF BRAIL by Richard S. Shaver. Novelette:35,000words.
- %Amazing Stories Feb.1946. Cover by Malcolm Smith.
 Vol. 20. No.1. Illustrated by Malcolm Smith.
 Continuation of I Remember Lemuria,
 INVASION OF THE MICRO-MEN by Richard S.Shaver.Novelett:21,500wds.
- %Amazing Stories May 1946. Cover by Arnold Kohn.
 Vol.20.No.2. Illustrated by J.W.Tillotson.
 THE MASKED WORLD by Richard S. Shaver. Novel: 50,000words.
- Fantastic Adventures May 1946. Illustrated by Malcolm Smith.
 Vol. 8. No. 2.
 AN ADAM FROM THE SIXTH by Richard S. Shaver. Short 5,700wds.
- Amazing Stories June 1946. Illustrated by Robert Fuqua.
 Vol.20. No.3.
 LODER VALLEY by Richard S. Shaver. Novelette: 11,000words.
- %Amazing Stories July 1946. Cover by Walter Parke
 Vol.20. No.4. Illustrated By M.Smith & N.Hadley.
 CULT OF THE WITCH QUEEN by R.S.Shaver and Bob McKenna.Novel:45,600.
- Fantastic Adventures July 1946. Illustrated by Allen St. John.
 Vol.8. No. 3.
 THE TALE OF THE LAST MAN by Richard S. Shaer. Short:2,000words.
- %Amazing Stories Aug.1946. Cover by H.W.McCauley.
 Vol.20. No.5. Illustrated J.W.Tillotson & Megarian.
 Continuation of Cult Of The Witch Queen
 THE SEA PEOPLE by Richard S. Shaer. Novelette: 25,700.

%Amazing Stories Sept.1946. Cover by Robert Gibson Jones.
 Vol.20. No.6. Illustrated by Julian S. Krupa.
 Companion Story To,The Masked World.(Wrongly listed in Ams as
 being the sequel to Cult of the Sea Queen.)
 EARTH SLAVES TO SPACE by Richard S. Shaver. Novelette: 30,000wds.

%Amazing Stories Nov.1946. Cover by Arnold Kohn.
 Vol. 20. No.8. Illustrated by Robert Fuqua
 Sequel to I Remember Lemuria & The Invasion Of The Micro-Men.
 THE RETURN OF SATHANAS by R.S. Shaver and Bob McKenna. Novel: 46,000

%Amazing Stories Dec. 1946. Cover by Bob Hibreth.
 Vol.20. No. 9. Illustrated by Malcolm Smith.
 THE LAND OF KUI by Richard S. Shaver. Short: 8,500 words.

%Amazing Stories Jan. 1947 Cover by H.W.McCauley.
 Vol.21. No. 1. Illustrated by H.W.McCauley.
 THE MIND ROVERS by Richard S. Shaver. Novelette: 27,500words.

Amazing Stories March 1947. Illustrated by Arnold Kohn.
 Vol.21. No. 3.
 JOE DANNON, PIONEER by Richard S.Shvare Novelette: 12,500words.

Fantastic Adventures March 1947. Illustrated by Rod Ruth.
 Vol.9. No. 3.
 THE PRINCESS AND HER PIG by Richard S. Shaver. Short: 6.000words.

Amazing Stoires May 1947. Illustrated by Malcolm Smith.
 Vol, 21. No. 5.
 THE CRYSTALLINE SARCOPHAGUS by Richard S. Shaver. Short:4,50Cwds.

Fantastic Adventures May 1947. Cover by Robert Gibson Jones.
 Vol. 9. No.5. Illustrated by Henry Sharp.
 THE TALE OF THE RED DWARF by The Red Dwarf. Novelette: 25,000wrds

%Amazing Stories June 1947. Cover by Robert Gibson Jones.
 Vol.21. No. 6. Illustrations by Enoch Sharp, Brady,
 (THE MYSTERY ISSUE) Malcolm Smith. RobertFuqua.J.S.Krupa.
 FORMULA FROM THE UNDERWORLD by Richard S.Shaver.Novelette:13,000wds.
 ZIGOR MEPHISTO'S COLLECTION OF MENTALIA by Shaver.Novelette:25,000.
 WITCH'S DAUGHTER by Richard S. Shaver. Novelette: 22,000words.
 THE RED LEGION by Richard S. Shaver. Short Novel:30,000words.

Amazing Stories August 1947. Illustrated by Robert Fuqua.
 Vol. 21. No. 8. and Julian S. Krupa.
 FIRST ROCKET by D. Richard Sharpe. Short 4,500words.
 %MER-WITCH OF ETHER 18 by Richard S. Shaver. Novelette:12,500wds.

Fantastic Adventures Oct.1947. Cover by Robert Gibson Jones.
 Vol. 9. No. 6. Illustrated by Malcolm Smith.
 WITCH OF THE ENDES by Richard S. Shaver. Novelette: 25,000words.

%Amazing Stories Dec. 1947. Illustrated by J.Allen St. John.
 Vol. 21, No. 12.
 OF GODS AND GOATS by Richard S. Shaver. Novelette: 14,000words.

Fantastic Adventures Feb.1948. Cover by Robert Gibson Jones.
Vol.10. No.2. Illustrated by Robert G. Jones.

SLAVES OF THE WORM by Richard S.Shaver. Novelette: 25,000words.

%Amazing Stories March 1948. Cover by Robert Gibson Jones.
Vol.22. No.5. Illustrated by Rod Ruth

GODS OF VENUS by Richard S. Shaver Novel, 87,000words.

FLESH AGAINST SPIRIT by Alexander Blade. Short: 3,500words.

(Illustrated by H.W.McCauley and is not a Mystery type story)

Fantastic Adventures March 1948. Illustrated by Henry Sharp.
Vol.10. No.3.

THE THIN WOMAN by Richard S. Shaver. Short: 5,000words.

Fantastic Adventures April 1948. Cover by Robert Gibson Jones.
Vol. 10. No.4. Illustrated by Malcolm Smith

LAIR OF THE GRIMALKIN by G.H.Irwin Novelette: 25,000words.

Amazing Stories June 1948 Cover by Robert Gibson Jones.
Vol. 22. No. 6. Illustrated by Rod Ruth

ICE CITY OF THE GORGON by R.S.Shaver and C.S.Geier.Novelette:32,000

Fantastic Adventures July 1948. Illustrated by Virgil Finlay.
Vol. 10. No. 7,

MIRROR OF THE QUEEN by Richard S. Shaver Short:8,000words.

%Amazing Stories Sept.1948. Cover by Robert Gibson Jones.
Vol. 22 No. 9. Illustrated by Rod Ruth

TITAN'S DAUGHTER by Richard S. Shaver. Novel: 50,000words.

Amazing Stories Dec. 1948. Cover by H.W.McCauley.
Vol.22. No. 12. Illustrated by Malcolm Smith .

DAUGHTER OF THE NIGHT by Richard S. Shaver Novelette: 15,000wds.

Fantastic Adventures Dec. 1948. Illustrated by Virgil Finlay.
Vol. 10. No. 12. 20,000wds.
FOUNTAIN OF TRIANGLE by Richard S.Shaver and C.S.Geier. Novelette:7

Amazing Stories January 1949. Illustrated by ????????

Vol.23. No. 1. Short:2,000words.

THE CYCLOPS by Richard S. Shaver.

Fantastic Adventures June 1949. Illustrated by Bill Terry.
Vol.11. No. 6.

THE CYCLOPEANS by Richard S. Shaver Novelette: 20,000words.

Amazing Stories May 1949. Illustrated by Bill Terry.
Vol. 23. No. 5.

WHEN THE MOON BOUNCED by Frank Patton Novelette: 26,000words.

Amazing Stories July 1949. Cover by Robert Gibson Jones.
Vol.23. No. 7. Illustrated by E.B. Swiatek.

EXILES OF THE ELMOUNDS by Richard S. Shaver. Novelette: 11,000.

Amazing Stories Sept.1949. Illustrated by J.Allen St. John.
Vol. 23. No. 9.

ERDIS CLIFF by Richard S. Shaver Short Novel: 30,000words.

Amazing Stories Nov.1949. Illustrated by J. Allen St. John.
 Vol.23. No. 11.
BATTLE IN ETERNITY by R.S. Shaver and C.S. Geier. Novelette:23,000

%Other Worlds Nov. 1949. Cover by Malcolm Smith.
 Vol. 1. No. 1. Illustrated by Malcolm Smith.
THE FALL OF LEMURIA by Richard S. Shaver Novelette: 17,500words.
WHERE NO FOOT WALKS by G.H. Irwin Novelette:15,000words.
 (Illustrated by Malcolm Smith. Not one of the Mystery stories).

Amazing Stories Dec. 1949. Illustrated by Julian S. Krupa.
 Vol. 23. No. 12.
PILLARS OF DELIGHT by Stan Raycraft. Novelette: 18,000words.

Amazing Stories Jan. 1950. Cover by Arnold Kohn.
 Vol. 24. No. 1. Illustrated by Julian S. Krupa.

WE DANCE FOR THE DOM by Richard S. Shaver. Novelette:17,000wds.

Other Worlds January 1950. Cover by Malcom Smith.
 Vol. 1. No. 2. Illustrated by Rod Ruth.
SONS OF THE SERPENT by Wes Amherst Short Novel: 27,000words

Fantastic Adventures March 1950. Illustrated by Bill Terry.
 Vol. 12. No. 3.
THE WORLD OF THE LOST by Paul Lohrman. Novel, 45,000words

Other Worlds March 1950 Illustrated by ??????
 Vol. 1. No.3.
LADY by Richard S. Shaver Short : 7,300words.
THE GAMIN by Peter Dexter Novelette: 20,000words.
MARAI'S WIFE by Edwin Benson Short: 4,200words.

Other Worlds Sept. 1950. Illustrated by Bill Terry.
 Vol. 2. No. 2.
PALACE OF DARKNESS by Peter Dexter. Short Novel:25,000words.

Future and S.F. Jan. 1951. Illustrated by P. Poulton.
 Vol. 1. No.5.
GREEN MAN'S GRIEF by Richard S. Shaver. Short 6,000words.

Other Worlds January 1951. Illustrated by W.H. McCauley
 Vol.3. No. 1.
GLASS WOMAN OF VENUS. by G.H. Irwin. Novelette: 17,500words.

Other Worlds Oct.1951. Illustrated by D.B.Berry.
 Vol. 3. No.6.
LIGHTENING WITH SATURN by R.S.Shaver and C.S.Geier. N'vlette:20,000
JOURNEY TO NOWHERE by Richard S. Shaver. Short: 7,000words.

Other Worlds Dec.1951. Illustrated by Bill Terry
 Vol.3. No. 7.
YELISEN by Richard S. Shaver. Short: 11,000words.

IF March 1952. Illustrated by ??????
 Vol.1. No.1.
OF STEGNER'S FOLLY by Richard S. Shaver Short:6,500 words.

%OTHER WORLDS, ISSUES JUNE, AUGUST, OCTOBER 1952.

Three Part Serial: THE SUN SMITHS by Richard S. Shaver
Novel: 50,000 words.

Other Worlds November 1952. Cover by Robert Gibson Jones.
Vol. 4. No. 8. Illustrated by Bill Terry

THE SCARPEIN OF DELTA SIRA by G.H. Irwin Short Novel: 33,500 words.
%BEYOND THE BARRIER by Richard S. Shaver. 1st part of a novel
length serial: 17,500 words.

%Other Worlds December 1952. Illustrated by C. Hornstein
Vol. 4. No. 9.

BEYOND THE BARRIER by Richard S. Shaver. 2nd part of serial
story: 15,000 words.

%Other Worlds January 1953. Illustrated by C. Hornstein.
Vol. 5. No. 1.

BEYOND THE BARRIER by Richard S. Shaver. 3rd part of serial
story: 15,000 words.

%Other Worlds February 1953. Illustrated by C. Hornstein.
Vol. 5. No. 2.

BEYOND THE BARRIER by Richard S. Shaver; Conclusion of four
part serial: 18,000 words.

Imagination April 1953. Illustrated by W.H. McCauley.
Vol. 4. No. 3.

PARADISE PLANET by Richard S. Shaver. Short 5,500 words.

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The above information was supplied by
David S. Gardner for use with the
'SHAVER SAGA' which was a lecture
delivered at the SPACE DIVE

Pome
filler

Ring-a-ring-o' geranium
A pocket full of uranium
Hiro, shima
All fall down.

Robin A. Henderson
Sunday Observer 1948

89

were presented as BIG THINGS. E.g, when coming to a batch of
three ASFs containing the serial 'Gunner Cade', Auctioneer Brown
93.

report by the editor. Apart from learning the fact that Bea M. had
spent so much time in Ireland before coming to England, and the
relief of reprints from Elder faz, I found this issue too White.

Sad news arrived this week, for I have read the last Q.
QUANDRY (No.30) announced that its former editor Lee Hoffman, surely
one of the great BNFs of our time, has resigned from cjay in favour
of a white horse and novel writing. Q was never my favourite fan-
zine, but I enjoyed every issue of it. It stood out head, shoulders
and bust over the majority of contemporary publications and was one
of a very small number of fanzines with a strong, individual
atmosphere.

(over)

99.

((??)). Passage from this end would have to be paid, but would quite likely be reimbursed at the other side, from where on, Ted

REPRINTED FROM HYPHEN No.5

T H E T R A N S A T L A N T I C F A N F U N D

Voting for a British fan to be helped attend the San Francisco World Convention and Westercon, September 1954, at the Sir Francis Drake Hotel.

((We enclose a ballot form and list of possible Candidates with this copy of S.D.))

To be eligible to vote you must ;

a/ Have been active in fandom prior to 1st November, 1953, to the extent of having joined a fan club or subscribed or contributed to a fanzine,

AND

b/ make a minimum contribution to the fund of 2/6 or 50c.
(money paid for postage, tickets, etc.)

Now a small clutch of luxury zines:-

EDITORIAL

IT IS with regret that we announce that after one year of bi-monthly publication, the publishing schedule of Space Diversions has to be drastically revised. With, and from, this issue, Space Diversions will appear irregularly. We promise, however, that you will still be seeing it for a long time to come. There is no intention on our part to suspend publication, and this change-over should not be construed as any indication of this.

The subscription rate remains unchanged at 3 issues for 2/6d, or 50 cents U.S., post free. For those who trouble to work this out per copy it will be seen that we are charging 10d only on subscription rates. Sample copies are to remain at one shilling per copy, but for this one, extra large, issue extra copies or non-subscription copies will be charged for at 2 shillings per copy. We are forced to double the the normal price on this occasion, but even so the production costs of one single copy are still in excess of any return from sales. Please note that the exchange system remains unaltered.

We feel that we owe our readers an explanation for this change from regular to irregular publication, and also to explain the delay between this and the previous issue. The causes or reasons can be attributed to two main points:

- 1) The sad lack of material from outside sources; it should be noted that behind some of the names on the contents page over 75 pages of this issue can be credited to the editorial staff, and,
- 2) The difficulty of calling editorial meetings and preparing the material in time for a tight deadline.

As can be seen from the contents page, the editorial staff consists of John Roles, Norman Shorrocks, Dave Gardner, and art editor Don MacKay. Because of home and other commitments editorial meetings have to be confined to the following occasions:-

Dave, who is unable to attend Club at present, sees Norman for one hour per week. John and Norman meet on Monday nights at Club; and Don is kept in touch with art matters via the phone. Did we say difficulties.....!

Editorial duties are shared, and production duties are as follows:- The typing is one-fingered by Dave in odd moments before work starts in the mornings, whilst Norman has to fit in the duplicating when his private work allows him time. And when you are confined to a few minutes or so a day...the production creeps along very slowly indeed. But don't think that we object to doing the work, we don't...but we do want to be able to take things a bit easier in future, and we believe that with no deadlines looming up in front of us all the time production and contents will continue to improve.

We've had some nice words tossed our way in the past, and we like 'em -- that's why you can be sure that we'll carry on!

The Editors.

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Ring-a-ring-o' geranium
A pocket full of uranium
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All fall down.

Robin A. Henderson
Sunday Observer 1948

*LONDON CONVENTION 1953

REPORT

IN THE YEAR of the coronation, many fans looked forward with eager expectation to the Convention, to be held in London as is usual. Not the coronation itself was so very important to the average conventioner, but with foreign visitors in London....one could be excused for expecting Great Things (no, not you, Hubbard, siddown).

Anticipation is often more enjoyable than the event -- and this certainly applied to this year's con. Months before, the Liverpool fan who was definitely going, had already decided to do the thing in style and hire a car, as a more independent means of transport than British Railways. Had we known better at the time, the money would not have burned through our pockets so quickly for such a poor return. We enjoyed the car ride.

SATURDAY

The first morning began with an enthusiastic looking crowd of fans setting up displays and visiting them; and an atmosphere of expectancy and good will pervaded the hall.

Fred Brown, Con Chairman, announced at 11 o'clock that the Convention was now formally open and that until 2.00 would be 'informal sessions'. ((This was but the first omission from the programme, a forerunner of the interminable intervals yet to come.)) So exhibitors hurriedly completed their stands and dashed around the other tables to see if any other fans had stolen their ideas or if there was any worth stealing, and there was a general mixing and meeting - somewhat tentatively it seemed to me - of fans who had not met before. Fans who had met at previous occasions were the first to break the ice, renewing and furthering their friendships. They introduced each other to freshen, and a fan might have found himself passed round a bewildering wave of new acquaintances, and forgetting most of them in the flurry.

This went on until people began disappearing to places of corporeal sustenance and things became temporarily quieter.

After lunch, the con proper got into motion with the introduction of some prominent SF personalities by Ted Carnell.

The first of these was Bill Temple with some usual humorous remarks about his side-kick Arthur C., which somehow never seem to pall, next was John Brunner, who spoke briefly on his introduction to SF and fandom; then came Pete Hamilton of Nebula; Geore Gallet of France, John Christopher, alias Sam Youd, nobody seems quite sure what to call him; Maurice Goldsmith; S. Mary Patchett; A. Vince Clarke, who told us something of his writings for the pro-market, and went on to speak about the backwardness of SF in attaining maturity in the eyes of the General Public. He doubted whether

* Otherwise known as 'THE FIASCON'

SF would ever quite attain the popularity which Detective Fiction enjoys. Frank Arnold was then brought to the microphone and he informed the audience that he had not read any new SF for about twelve years, and had stopped getting magazines regularly about 1954. He deplored the lack of originality in modern SF -- he'd read all the tales before, seen all the drawings before((obviously an old, o-o-o-o-old pho-a-a-an!)). He wondered if the authors couldn't get off the very much beaten track of edited, magazine SF, and go straight to the publishers. The magazines, he reckoned, were stultifying the writers by their having policies and pulp taboos. "Let's see if we can't get out of the 'chain-gang' of science-fiction writing," he asked us as a final plea. Ted Carnell added to this that there was in recent years a trend away from the 'chain-gang' style and quoted as examples 'The Lovers' and 'The Demolished Man'.

Then Ted, giving a big plug for Dave Gardner's 'Symposium Of Sex And Sadism In Current Science-Fiction', invited authors to give the audience their ideas on the subject. John Christopher asked why Picky Spillane sold. He saw no advantage in having suggestive stories in SF mags, and plenty of advantages in not having them. It was a bad thing, he concluded. Mr. Hutton (USA), from the audience, stated that SF was a substitute activity, and a lady added that if by injecting some sex into SF we can introduce others into the field, then by all means permit it. The reply to this was that it was unworkable. The sales of the Fantastic in which Spillane appeared were due only to his name and that unless they published one in every issue, sales would revert to normal. Spillane would certainly not encourage a reader to explore the SF field further. A member of the audience asserted that whereas sexy stories gave one only an orgasm, SF has the depth to give birth -- to thought. Ted told us that he had received many letters from indignant parents, even on such innocent stories as had appeared in Nova Publications. Bob Fairthorne spoke a few words on the subject of pornography in general. "Good pornography," he said, "is a very rare thing. It is very hard to write -- and harder still to get hold of." (Laughter). John Brunner brought Shaver into the picture and questioned why his stories should have caught on so well as he had no great story-telling ability. But then he admitted to the fact that he had read only one and a bit stories by Shaver. Those who are drawn into the field through sexy stories do not increase the readership of SF; these readers simply sift the magazines and stories for the sex and disregard the SF content. Science-Fiction gains nothing from them and loses much in prestige. Norman Mansborough added his opinion, and then another member of the audience (a statistician) said that he took exception to Mr. Hutton's statement that SF was a substitute activity. "Thank you very much," he said, "but my sex life is going very well." He read SF for two principle reasons, 1) he liked to follow an author's logical argument from his primary suppositions and extrapolations, and, 2) he likes the stuff.

At about 3-15, Ted came up with some general information and news items. He told us that Mr. Soliback of NSF was present, thus making six representatives from the States. Then he announced a scheme being organised by Don Ford, for getting a British fan over for the Philcon, or failing the possibility of that as the Philcon was so close, then the following year's convention in San Francisco

((??)). Passage from this end would have to be paid, but would quite likely be reimbursed at the other side, from where on, Ted said, there would be no difficulty as to stones for pillows etc.

The Junior Fanatics, Britain's self-appointed representatives of 62th(?) fandom, then perpetrated a play-reading, which was to have been at 3.00, and had been cancelled owing to an actor's absence, was shuvved back into the programme together with a volunteer who had offered to fill the vacant role at short notice. Unfortunately, it would have been better for all concerned if they had not attempted to do this, as no one seemed to know his or her part; missed cues and shuffled and dropped sheets ruined an already badly misfired but still heroic attempt to instil a littel variety into the proceedings.

Dave Cohen, at 3.45, bearing the flaming torch of Manchester Fandom, tried unsuccessfully, as it was quite obvious to even his most ardent supporters, to rouse the rabble against the institution of a yearly National Convention in London. Points he stressed were the apathy of the London Circle, their unwillingness to aid other clubs and fanzines. "Have we got to ask the London Circle if we can hold a convention?" "The London Circle is a tight circle." "We don't say that the London Circle shouldn't have a convention. We only ask them to help other centres of fanactivity to organise a con in the provinces. Surely it's not asking too much to ask them to support the provincial fans with their presence?" Another accusation levelled against the London people was their unpleasant-ness. And so on in similar vein. But his petulant tirade fell on the stoniest of ground. Fred Brown did not agree with anything Dave said, of course, and was the first to leap to the London defence. "There is definitely no apathy," he said. And, "We are a circle of friends, but we are not a club and so we have no organised body." Replying to Dave's comment on the lack of support by London at the Manchester Convention last year, Fred said, "You must write and ask the celebrities to come to the con. Personally I didn't know about the Mancon. Did you write to me?" (Oooooohs! from the audience). Cohen:- No. Eric Bentcliffe rose and said that on the Friday before the 1952 Loncon, a large placard advertising the Mancon was displayed at the White Horse and also in the Convention Hall itself...There were also hundreds of leaflets on it knocking around.((In fact there was one on every chair in the hall.)) Vince Clarke then denied seeing these((tch! tch! Vince we're surprised at you)) and went on to say that he had tried to awaken interest in the Mancon amongst the White Horse crowd, but it was felt that the short time - one day - was not worth the time and expense involved for a Londoner. (Audience: Hear, hear). Both Bert Campbell and he stressed the need for advertising. They even wrote to Eagle Comics about this Loncon. But they did not add the fact that their most profitable advertising came from their own magazines, Authentic and New Worlds, wherein they would naturally have it free.

((This fractious complaint of Dave's was no doubt well intentioned, and too, was justly called for; but was most ill-advised and led only to much wrangling and bitter feeling. The Londoners believe of course that Dave is the spokesman for all the North - (just as McCain is under the impression that Willis speaks for all Britain.) It was after this, and Campbell's evasive reply at length, that the rift was felt, which thereafter grew wider as the con progressed.))

The next item on the programme was entitled 'Whiskers'. This was in the form of a newsreel report on H.J Campbell's scientific researches and their results. Very amusing, and we intended to make extensive notes on this and bring you the full story, but we were informed that the full text would be published (in a post-convention booklet?). WAW was responsible for the script.

This was followed by an item omitted from the afternoon's programme, and brought forward - "Why I Read Science-Fiction". For this, Fred Brown picked out at random individuals from the audience to give their reasons. Among those who stood up were Dave Cohen, Brian Burgess and Bob Fairthorne, whose answer was probably the best - "Why do I read Science-Fiction? 1) Because I can read, and 2) I like it. ((This terse answer was well appreciated by the audience.))

At half past five the games were started under the Games Master Ted Tubb. They took the form of a quizzing of ten volunteers from the crowd, who were asked such questions as: What is alcohol? What is a palimpsest? How many moons has Jupiter? (Upon which question there was considerable disagreement -- What is the latest score?) Etc. Then another ten persons were asked to step forward for another batch of questions on SF story characters, and so on. Each correct answer earned the winner a voucher for a bob or so which was good for con currency.

Before the auction was an original ballet starring Daphne Buckmaster, Dorothy Rattigen, Fred Brown, Ron Buckmaster, Charlie Duncombe and Ted Tubb. This was to the tune of was rather fun, and was one of the few worthwhile items.

THE AUCTIONS.

These in former years have been regarded as the high spots of the programme: this year they were an unmitigated flop. This was due to the lack of interesting material; which again was due in part to the poor response by fans to requests for donations. The vast bulk (literal) of the material consisted of BREs, which nobody wanted and if bid for, were returned once again to the auctioneer. Ultimately they were given away -- and even then rejected, until some stout scout ((a Junior Fanatic?)) in the gathering announced that they would accept all unwanted BREs for shipping to Australian fans. This was a happy solution and mags flew from all parts of the hall. At a rough count near the end, he found he had over 70 magazines.

Ted Tubb who usually officiates at this function, and was scheduled to do so, was replaced by Fred Brown very early in the proceedings, and one or two others who gave Fred a much needed rest. For a short time it seemed that the situation might be saved by the help of Ken Slater who struggled valiantly to inject some enthusiasm into a disgruntled audience. But even his optimism and drive waned when he realised that you can't give away a sack of nutty slack to someone who wants coal.

We thought that the bringing of the BREs in such quantity was merely to get them out of the way before getting to the meatier and more worthwhile stuff. But hours went by and still nothing of import turned up. The only items of slightly more interest were some recent ASFs, GSFs and some hard cover books. These were presented as BIG THINGS. E.g, when coming to a batch of three ASFs containing the serial 'Gunner Cade', Auctioneer Brown

announced in hushed tones, "And now, - a collector's item" Last years' mags - Collectors' items! Other 'Big Things' were hard cover books kindly donated to the Convention Fund by Graysons and other publishers. Also a big plaster model from Graysons of a Green Bem, but this was the very last thing to be auctioned and everybody had given up in disgust and left the circle of bidders.

The first night ended in a general scrimmage for half-crowns' worths of BREs. For 2/6 you helped yourself to an armful of the stuff from a table piled high with them.

Near the end of the proceedings on the second night, Fred Brown auctioned an unspecified colour painting of a spaceship, which might have been a Russian Icon or an old boot as far as the auctioneer was concerned. There was some half-hearted bidding and someone asked "Who's it by?" Reasonably enough. Tony Thorne who was holding the illo up for people to see what it was they were bidding for (surprising the number of fan auctioneers who don't do this) scanned it for a signature, as the bidding went on. Up to about 2/6d. Then just as it was actually knocked down for this - as it turned out - ridiculous figure, Tony was heard to say "Rogers", much in the same tone as he might have said "Now is the time". Somebody in the row immediately recalled the source and said it was the original for the cover painting of one of the ASFs of the early forties. Department for Lost Chances.....

On the day after the convention, John was going round the now empty and very much littered hall, collecting the last few items from Space Diversions display table when he thought he would have a look on the stage, where the auction had taken place the night before. There was a load of rubbish left behind in boxes, and papers of all descriptions all over the place. He rummaged casually in a box of papers and junk and came across two scraper board illos. They were rather grubby, but nothing that a rubber would not erase. They bore a legend each. One 'Tower of Darkness', the other 'Stability'. He cackled gleefully knowing they were from 1946 ASFs illustrating stories by Bertram Chandler.

These two episodes are mentioned because we think it shows how apathetically the auction was handled -- not knowing or seeming to care what the items were, and throwing away original promag illos. The three items here noticed should have brought, in half a minute what it took an hour to raise through the selling of BRE Amazings and Fantastic Adventures.

The dancing which was scheduled for 10.30 to 11.00 on the first night was conveniently forgotten, as most people had drifted off in boredom long before.

THE ROOFCON.

About a dozen or so London and other BNFs had been invited to share some liquor in one of the Liverpool Group's rooms, being our excuse for a really good informal session. Around the hour of as the phone rings, a deathly 'ush descends on those in 146 eleven some five of them were gathered in Room 326 with nine of the Liverpool and Manchester Groups. Four of these guests left after ten or fifteen minutes, when we were visited by a porter and gently requested to keep the noise down as there had been a complaint. We never learned from whom; but the hotel was being used at the same time for "The Queen's Army School Mistresses Reunion".

After White, Willis and wife had gone and the third bottle of whiskey, we had another visit from the hall porter whom we persuaded to swallow a glass of Scotch. We decided to move to a room nearer the end of the corridor to be further away from the sleeping populace of the rest of the hotel. Here, we found our numbers reduced to nine. Bill Temple had also left. There was, Frank M. Ines, Jim Mooney and John and Norm, your editors, from Liverpool; Eric Bentcliffe, Eric Jones, Terry Jeeves from Manchester, Norm (the tub) Weedall ((who resides in Liverpool but only attends meetings in Manchester!...)), and last but certainly not least, Ken Slater. Frank and Terry were happily composing a story commencing "The shleek red splace thip thricked thilently thru the atmosphere." Somebody found they were sitting on the crisps. Everybody was happy and then another hotelier knocked on the door and said that there had been another complaint. After some furious whispering and a promise to keep our voices low he left and then Norman S. and Frank M. had the bright idea of using the roof. A Roofcon! The idea was wildly popular and with bottles and glasses safely in our pockets we crept as silently as we could up the fire escape -- roofwards!

Here we found that some of our number was missing and we later learnt that Ken, Frank and Terry were having words with the staff in the hall. The last was persuaded to leave the hotel quietly and we saw no more of him that night.

Meanwhile we were wandering round the chimney pots and Eric was dropping empties down them, until Frank eventually mounted to the roof and told us we would have to drop the curtains on the party((we must have been up there for fully an hour, but to our accelerated time sense it seemed about ten minutes.)) So with reluctance we left the starlit upperworld and descended to the hall where we made a last stand for freedom. But the staff was made of sterner stuff and stood stolidly behind his desk, refusing to comment on the convention, our activities and problems. He either could not or would not offer any suggestions as to where we could carry on a quiet(?) drink as long as we liked. Unwillingly, we separated and went our respective ways to abodes of sleep.

On the following night, those who were not resident at the hotel were refused admission to the bedrooms, even for the purposes of reclaiming one's properties. They would be brought down for you. After this followed another discussion with the night porter as to the quality of their service and hospitality to guests. I forget who it was who tried the other approach, but it sounds like Ken Slater's sound simple psychology. He asked man to man in a confidential tone, where one could go for a drink after the normal hours. (British Licensing law and hours being absurd, the result of bureaucracy.) and was directed to the hotel opposite. We tried this but could not see any bar, so coming out we gave it up hopelessly as a bad job and retired early to our rooms, well before midnight. We actually brought home several bottles which were purchased for a dreamed-of all-night-session, and were not consumed, for lack of cooperation and amenities.

Is there no solution to this problem in this country?

Perhaps we had better accept Willis's convention suggestion last year - Gay Paree. And that's where it's likely to be for us next year!

SUNDAY

The programme for this second day of the convention was split up into two parts (Part Two and Part Three) as a second hall had been hired for an additional and optional programme. Unfortunately the film show which was to have been the central feature of this extra choice, was cancelled owing to an oversight on the part of the organiser.

Apparently, it was on Thursday, the very eve of the convention, that the gentleman in charge of the film show, learned that the permission of the London County Council was necessary before one could hold a film show. He found that 24 hours' notice was required and as it was Whit weekend it was impossible to put it through in time. Never was so much so badly managed by so few in so short a time and space.

The other item on the extra programme was the Medway Group's. This I believe was doing quite nicely when Fred Brown came upon the scene and drove a large number of attendees to the main hall where something was supposed to be happening. But when they got there, they were asked if they would be patient and wait as they had been doing on and off throughout almost the whole convention.

And so the day dragged its weary way through desultorily
~~whatistheprogramme title: ofthisinterval?intervalintervalintervalint~~
presented items, for many of which the participants could not be found and the audience was exhorted to be patient and remain seated.

The most encouraging things which we can pick out for mention were the Guest Editors' addresses, when Nic Oosterban of Planet, Maurice Goldsmith, former science editor UNESCO, Bea Mahaffey of Other Worlds, and Peter Hamilton of Nebula, gave short speeches. These four made a very good sally and revived a little of the then almost moribund convention tone.

Les Flood then announced the Fantasy Awards (altho' he made a good speech, he sounded very depressed about the whole thing, but after all fanapathy does tell on one after a time, and he must suffer plenty))

The 'firsts' went to 'City' and 'Lands Beyond'.

The other event of the day was the sudden arrival of L. Ron Hubbard, and his presentation to a completely unsuspecting audience. After pointedly remarking that he was "going to talk about S.F." he went on to tell us in a roundabout way of his coming 250,000 word novel, far removed, as he put it, from the usual blurb "book length novel" of about 20,000 !

* * * * *

Strangely enough, we note that in the August 'Space Times' Dorothy Rattigan has anticipated fans' reactions to the fiasco.... strange too that we have something very similar by Ted Tubb in this! What do you think ?

THE EDITORS .

A TEAR FOR A ROCKETEER

I gazed on him with awe and admiration
And then a tear of pity dimmed my eye
That he, the first to leave this Earth and safe
Return
Should helpless and pathetic lie.

His body quivered and I sensed that he
Lived still those few brief hours 'twixt earth and moon.
His gaze met mine and in his eyes I see
The stars
As he had seen them all too soon.

I thought; how strange that one so young, so fair
So sure of immortality, should yet
Have left full half his life behind and thus
Accursed,
Betray no bitterness nor sour regret.

And then my tears were dried as I realised
That though the first to leave this earth must be
Within the space of moons - for he lay gross
And grunting -
This famous porker never would be pie.

Paul Enever.

STRANGE THIRST

O
Goblet of rich dark gore
In your chalice of bright black jet.
Glistening so limpidly
Crimsonly, viscidly
Oblation to the red god War.

Ah!
Incarnadine lips now sip,
And it slides over sharp white teeth
As the ichor so turbidly,
Silkily, scarletly
Starts down the dry throat to drip.

Ay!
Strange eager thirst now quenched,
And the essence of life drained dry
From that once husky form
Which the pale light of morn
Reveals to be flesh now blenched.

John D. Roles.

T H E T R A N S A T L A N T I C F A N F U N D

Voting for a British fan to be helped attend the San Francisco World Convention and Westercon, September 1954, at the Sir Francis Drake Hotel.

((We enclose a ballot form and list of possible Candidates with this copy of S.D.))

To be eligible to vote you must ;

a/ Have been active in fandom prior to 1st November, 1953, to the extent of having joined a fan club or subscribed or contributed to a fanzine,

AND

b/ make a minimum contribution to the fund of 2/6 or 50c.
(money paid for raffle tickets does not count.)

No proxy votes are allowed. Each fan must sign his own ballot paper. The details of the voting will be kept secret but the names of all voters will be published and the ballot papers sent for checking to either Forry Ackerman or Bob Tucker before being destroyed.

Any reasonable number of ballot forms may be obtained on request, either from Walt Willis or Norm Shorrock, but completed forms should be sent only to the former.

Walter hopes that there will be electioneering on behalf of the various candidates, which will increase interest in the fund, and space will be available at 10/- per full page (smaller areas pro rata) in the next Hyphen. Space Diversions makes the same offer. ALL RECEIPTS WILL GO TO THE FUND.

The state of the fund as at 8th November 1953, is as follows:

Coroncon auctions.	1.	11.	6
Coroncon raffle	3.	6.	0
W. Willis	2.	0.	0
A. Clark		5.	0
Eric Bentcliffe		5.	0
Ethel Lindsay		5.	0
Peter Hamilton		9.	0
Archie Mercer	1.	0.	0
Norman Wandsborough.		2.	6
Max Leviten (Della).		10.	0
Mrs Carol Smith		7.	2
Ken Slater		5.	0
Of 'Prelude to Space' comp.		11.	7
Evelyn Smith		10.	0
Total	£11.	7.	9

Further statements will be published.

OTHER FANZINES PLEASE COPY

STILL OUTGRABING... FZ REVIEWS

Since the last batch of fanzines were reviewed some pages back, I have received another cargo which I will now proceed to atomise. Of these the earliest held is SEVACRAM (van Splawn), VINI, d/d Apr. '53. 12pp. on coloured paper, duplicated. Superman type graces the cover. The best items are the two reprints from earlier fanzines: Red Boggs's article on Edward Bellamy and Paul Cartier's eulogy on (of all things) Schachner's Past, Present and Future series. Cartier points out, fairly enough, that Schachner's anti-fascist message was admirable enough a background for his SF Vehicle, and he put forth a plea for the continuation of the abruptly terminated sequence of stories; but today the Schachner-style is an atavism - almost unreadable as far as I'm concerned - and his insufferably bright young heroes, absurd battles against impossible odds and his repetitive basic plot point to the general low standard accepted as good at that time. Out of the twenty odd stories of his I have read (having glanced at Day's Index) I find that the only story of his I have really enjoyed is 'Cold' - one of his very last contributions to ASF. Anyway the Seva-ram outlook is promising, if this is the type of thing they mean to publish.

CAMBER (P.J. Robinson) N.2. 26 pp. duplicated on blong 8vo. This is devoted (exactly!) to the Coroncon Report, mostly a personal angle. A nicely produced issue, well duped and very amusingly illustrated by Bill Price.

ASTROPEER (P. & H. Turner) N.2. Summer '53, pp.20. This is faultlessly produced, neat, clear and with justified margins. But I found only two rewarding items herein:- Sandy Sanderson's 'A Word Is A Word Is A Word', a short article on General Semantics; and a poem 'The Unicorn' by L. Goldstone reprinted from Diallerie. Symbolic lithocover.

HYPHEN (W.A. Willis) N.4. Oct '53. pp 28 - 142 of which are thrown away on James White's delirious droolings on his pre-con tour of Ireland accompanied by Bea Schaffey and the Willises. This 8,000 word travelogue I must say I found pointless, uninteresting and quite unamusing. The remainder of the mag consisted mostly of Coroncon report by the editor. Apart from learning the fact that Bea M. had spent so much time in Ireland before coming to England, and the relief of reprints from Elder fzz, I found this issue too White.

Sad news arrived this week, for I have read the last Q. QUANDRY (No.30) announced that its former editor Lee Hoffman, surely one of the great BNFs of our time, has resigned from a job in favour of a white horse and novel writing. Q was never my favourite fanzine, but I enjoyed every issue of it. It stood out head, shoulders and bust over the majority of contemporary publications and was one of a very small number of fanzines with a strong, individual atmosphere.

(over)

Now a small clutch of luxury zines!:-

ZENITH (Pickles and Turner) June '53. pp23. Handsome 2-col.litho-cover with a repeated motif of octopus and space-suited figure in flight (or pursuit?) The production and contents are of the superior kind, all very good but no one exceptionally outstanding. Eminently readable and completely fannish, was 'Anon's' 'Advice to Neofans' ; Vin Clarke's Vereal was quite important, revealing to us lay fen, the working of "SF" film serial publicity, from the professional angle. These sidelights on SF from the trade journals always make interesting fanfood. A disappointing item was Webb's "Why do we read SF", which useful to those who missed Arthur Koestler's broadcast and the text of it in 'The Listener', was simply a precis of the talk. What was needed was a strong reply. Any true red-blooded fan would have been highly indignant at some of Koestler's arguments. My impression was that he was speaking in bitterness, after having written an SF story himself and had it rejected!

KOOLINDA (Leon Stone) No.9. Dec '52. ppl6. F'cap 8vo. A typographical treasure printed on sensuously delightful paper in black with green initials, it is a pleasure to behold. Unfortunately the contents are not so interesting, being non-SF except for a couple of pages of Lovecraft bibliography.

DESTINY (M. Willits & E. Kemp) N.8. Spring '53. 32pp. Contains much useful work:- a short story by David Keller, and a vindication of his work by Moskowitz, some Tarzan film history, the interesting story of Fantasy Press (L.A.Eshbach), a Saucer Self and poems - all very well illustrated with photos, drawings and cartoons. A highly satisfying zine.

SCIENCE-FICTION ADVERTISER. Fall '53. V.6. No.6. This is a mag that I can honestly say I look forward to, and is one of the few worth reading more than once. In this number, sfanalyst Arthur Jean Cox goes to work on the anatomy of Fantastic Literature: top grade material. This article, though not the length of his van Vogt effort, is quite as searching in its quest for exactitude of definition and classification. Two books from Galaxy-serials are reviewed at length (Demolished Man and Space Merchants), and over a dozen others.

Back to normal again with MEDWAY JOURNAL (Tony Thorne) No.4. no date. pp26. sm.4to. This is the journalistic equivalent, I suppose, of Wilfrid Pickles, or for the benefit of transatlantic readers, 'folksy' I think the word is. Homely, unsophisticated fun. Two brief science articles sound a serious note (hypnotism and antibiotics), and the rest is mainly of local interest, group activities and reviews.

DAWN (Charles Wells) N.18. No.'53, ppl3(?) This rather odd-shaped mag is hektoed without conspicuous success on legal --(elongated foolscap) --size, art-surfaced paper, with a mimeod front cover 2 and inch larger on two edges and the bacover smaller on one edge by the same. In my copy there are three page 5s, page 4 being on the front on of one of them, the other's backs being blank. Work that out! All this hojpoj is however, very glibly explained in the text. Yed is out for a long publishing life rather than high quality. He believes, and probably quite correctly, that the
100!

search for perfection leads to the cessation of activity once optimum quality with available facilities has been reached. He instances Bob Johnson and Manly Bannister. With this philosophy in view one might expect something extra in the way of material - but no! - three pieces of rather dim fan fiction were illumined only by the warm glow from Russ Watkins's notice of Berlioz's Symphonie Fantastique, whose programme he describes.

Then there's ROCKETS (R.L.Farnsworth) with his usual DOG-matic editorial. This issue consists of bits, letters and filler type stuff. GEMTONES (G.M.Carr) 'Calcite' No.25. (SAPS).

Appearance Somewhat patchy duping to begin with, but apologised for. Variety Little -- Fmz reviews.

Comments GMC has done some job here. She reviews 18 Sapszines, 6 British, 3 Canadian, 3 Aussie and 48 USA fmz. 78 full-length reviews, not just notices! But she wants some willing fan to help her out on this fmz review business.

A new British fanmag, name of ORBIT (George Gibson) appeared on the fan-lanes d/d Sepoc '53. This is a product of the Leeds group. (Initialled L.S.F.A., not to be confused with L.S.F.S. (that's us) or L.S.F.O. (that's Pete Campbell of the Lakeland SF Organisation) V.l. N.l. has 11pp. duped, with hektoed cover in three colours. Contains serious type stuff (not stuffy mind you) including: a brief survey of English fanorg since 1935 by one of the most knowledgeable on such matters -- too looong dormant, Mike Rosenbloom; a booky couple of pages by Jack Smillie, the Leeds Group Secretary, on oldish fantasy titles.

ORBIT V.l. N.2. Novded '53, ppl5, is also to hand. Mike R. relates his experiences of book hunting in London recently. I happened to be there the same week oddly enough and I found the same situation he describes. SF is now recognised as Business, and second-hand items of any vintage at all are extremely elusive, let alone collector's pieces. In the twelve months interval since my own last book hunt, the scene has changed considerably, for the worse. Jack Smillie again flits thro' some out of the way fantasy books with some (to me) new discoveries. In this issue's 'Viewpoints' Darlington takes up the axc in defence of SF 'bloods' - seems a vindication of British pocket books. Orbit, I venture to prophecy, has a future. With two issues like this to begin with and Mike as technical advisor(?). it should go far in the fanworld. But it is to be hoped that the appearance will improve in issues to come.

John D. Roles.

SKETCH FROM LIFE (True Confessions Dept.)

Scene: Bookshop.

Personnae: Chief Assistant. (Horsey type)

1st Assistant. (John Roles)

Customer. (Schoolmaster looking for books for school library

1st Assistant (showing Customer a copy of P.E.Cleator's "Into Space", just out) 'How about this?'

Customer (looking down nose) 'Is it serious?'

1st Assistant (seeing red, but heroically controlling voice and flicking pages of math and science under Customer's nose) 'Oh yes, look.'

Chief Assistant (smiling condescendingly) 'He's keen on that sort of thing. Space ships and all that sort of tripe.'

Customer (smiling likewise) 'Oh, then it isn't serious.'

1st Assistant retires defeated.

JDR.

EDITORIAL

IT IS with regret that we announce that after one year of bi-monthly publication, the publishing schedule of Space Diversions has to be drastically revised. With, and from, this issue, Space Diversions will appear irregularly. We promise, however, that you will still be seeing it for a long time to come. There is no intention on our part to suspend publication, and this change-over should not be construed as any indication of this.

The subscription rate remains unchanged at 3 issues for 2/6d, or 50 cents U.S., post free. For those who trouble to work this out per copy it will be seen that we are charging 10d only on subscription rates. Sample copies are to remain at one shilling per copy, but for this one, extra large, issue extra copies or non-subscription copies will be charged for at 2 shillings per copy. We are forced to double the the normal price on this occasion, but even so the production costs of one single copy are still in excess of any return from sales. Please note that the exchange system remains unaltered.

We feel that we owe our readers an explanation for this change from regular to irregular publication, and also to explain the delay between this and the previous issue. The causes or reasons can be attributed to two main points:

- 1) The sad lack of material from outside sources; it should be noted that behind some of the names on the contents page over 75 pages of this issue can be credited to the editorial staff, and,
- 2) The difficulty of calling editorial meetings and preparing the material in time for a tight deadline.

As can be seen from the contents page, the editorial staff consists of John Roles, Norman Shorrocks, Dave Gardner, and art editor Don MacKay. Because of home and other commitments editorial meetings have to be confined to the following occasions:-

Dave, who is unable to attend Club at present, sees Norman for one hour per week. John and Norman meet on Monday nights at Club; and Don is kept in touch with art matters via the phone. Did we say difficulties.....!

Editorial duties are shared, and production duties are as follows:- The typing is one-fingered by Dave in odd moments before work starts in the mornings, whilst Norman has to fit in the duplicating when his private work allows him time. And when you are confined to a few minutes or so a day...the production creeps along very slowly indeed. But don't think that we object to doing the work, we don't...but we do want to be able to take things a bit easier in future, and we believe that with no deadlines looming up in front of us all the time production and contents will continue to improve.

We've had some nice words tossed our way in the past, and we like 'em -- that's why you can be sure that we'll carry on!

The Editors.

More Local Affairs

Having changed my shirt we'll carry on.

July 20th Jesse Floyd paid us another visit and presented the Library with a number of the latest promags.

Aug 11th An Auction was held in aid of the funds out of which the Society benefited by 19/5d and SD by £2-0-9d.

Aug 24th The Society was honoured by a visit from A. Bertram Chandler and his wife. We extracted a promise from him for a short autobiog. for our 'S-F Personalities' column.

Oct 5th A Big Occasion. The looth meeting. This was held at that old haunt of ours, The Lisbon Grill. Eleven members were present and two guests from SuperManchester, Eric Bentcliffe and Brian Varley. Water pistols were again de rigueur and one of the most amusing incidents happened when Brian Varley was happily backing down Victoria Street, blasting away, backed into a policeman. It says much for Brian's presence of mind that the policeman wasn't deluged. After the Lisbon closed we retired to the club therein to disport ourselves. Donald McKay had his usual funny hat on (this matches his usual funny face) and was given to disappearing every so often into a very large waste paper basket. He had some difficulty extracting himself from said basket and on going home a passer-by was heard to remark that, "this was the first time he'd seen a waste paper basket walking along with a trilby hat on." Nobody seems to remember how they got home.

Oct 12th The Society was visited by George Shiel from I.O.M., I expect he wondered why we were the worse for wear. If he reads the above he'll know why.

Nov. 23rd The Annual General Meeting

John Roles read the Secretary's Report and Stan Nuttall read the Treasurer's ditto. The Officers for the coming year were elected and are the same as last year i.e. Norman Shorrocks, Chairman; John Roles, Secretary; and Stan Nuttall, Treasurer. (Good, I can still buy that new Bentley. ((Gently there, Stan! Eds.))) Determination of membership was discussed and certain members who had not been heard of for some time were deleted from the books. The meeting closed with a general discussion on ways and means to recruit new members without resorting to press gangs.

Incidentally, for all members who are glued to their radios on Mondays to listen to 'Journey Into Space' we now have a radio at the Society's HQ (the Stork Hotel) so you won't miss it if you come along.

See you in the SDs,

Stan.

WILL THE SUPERMANCON TREASURER KINDLY RETURN MY ZAP GUN?

SHADOW ON THE HEARTH by JUDITH MERRIL
287 pages, and
priced at 9s. 6d.

I HAVE been reading Science-Fiction for the past twelve years or so, which adds up to a devil of a lot of reading; occasionally; all too occasionally sad to relate, I come across a tale which is sufficiently different or masterly executed to leave a lasting impression on me. *SHADOW ON THE HEARTH* is such a story, and falls under the 'sufficiently different' classification.

Judith Merrill, or Mrs. Frederik Pohl, has used her womanly intuition in seeking a fresh approach to the over-worked, atomic-war-type story. Instead of heavy-handed horror, mob riots, mutants and the other usual gimmicks, she has concentrated on the family aspects of sudden war; a theme which I feel certain only a woman could handle satisfactorily. She has done just that.

The principal characters are: Gladys Mitchell; her two daughters, fifteen-year-old Barbie and five-year-old Ginnie; an on-the-make neighbour in charge of the relief trucks; a young doctor; a school master suspected of subversive activities; and the Austrian maid, Veda.

The story opens with ordinary every-day happenings, Veda is sick and unable to come to the Mitchell's, the two children have to be readied for school, and Jon, Gladys's husband, has a downtown contact to make in connection with his work as a field engineer. Gladys finds herself landed with the weekly wash when she should be attending a luncheon at a friend's house. It is whilst she is in the cellar busily engaged with the washing-machine that the missiles fall over New York. Her two daughters return from school but her husband is missing. The radio blares its warnings, the emergency squads arrive with their hastily printed instructions, and the bottom falls out of her normal world.

Her eldest daughter, Barbie, who is striving to prove herself a woman and not a child, shows the first symptoms of radiation sickness: sickness, and a urinalysis test confirms this. Gladys's troubles do not end there, however. Dr. Levy, the school master, is forced to seek refuge with them from the security squads, knowing all the time that he too is a radiation sickness casualty, one who would receive little or no medical attention if he reported to the emergency hospitals. Her officious neighbour, Jim Turner, who is in charge of one of the squads, shows himself to be more interested in her than his line of duty warrants: A missing husband, a badly worried wife and mother, and a man with newly-delegated power in his hands!And then five-year-old Ginnie and a comb bring fresh horror to her in the form of.....

But from there on you are on your own, and I urge you to make certain of reading it. This is the type of story which can do much good for Science-Fiction as an introductory item as well as a collection necessity. It was published in America in 1950, and now Sidgwick & Jackson bring it over to our side of the Atlantic to receive, without a doubt, as much praise as is already credited to it in the States. Read it, it's one to remember!

BRASH HACKS

stabled by Norman Shorrock

After the last ish I certainly didn't imagine for one moment that the letter section would be starting on page 105 in thish, notwithstanding that rash promise on page 26 !

Ah well ! that's fanac for you, it gets you sooner or later... that reminds me, has anyone copies of MAD, Nos. 3, 5 & 6 ? There is a good market in these parts.....

Now to the letters, first on the pile is EVA FIRESTONE "The Poll was very interesting-and the results more so- I was highly pleased to see Astounding SCIENCE-FICTION lead with such a large score. I was wondering how the voters would decide which titles were to be classed under the heading- fantasy. The difference... ..has bewildered fen since the beginning of time..and probably will go on doing so to the end."***M. McWILLIAMS of 4 Wesley Rd., Wellington New Zealand writes to discuss the sf, and wants to buy copies of 'A Honeymoon in Space' by George Griffith and 'Captain Gault', 'Tales of the strong' both by R.H. Hodgson. Can anyone help?

"When I mentioned it to Harry, he hastily foisted me off on to you"

TED TUBB "Swallowing my disappointment at your not being able to find my article and sub - that SUB ! Man do you realise that S.D. is only the second mag I've ever subscribed to in my Life! The cash is a mere nothing beside the narrow escape at almost not getting the mag at all. Horror!"

Okay Ted, we curse the post office! ***BRIAN LEWIS "Thanks for Spider 6, rec'd just before the con - after the excitement(?) and entertainment(??) of that notable (???) event has died away, I'm getting clued up with various letters

"I changed into an atmosphere stream and went out thru the ventilator" unanswered and usual etc. of a neglected fan-mail... Material in thish,

standard. Thanks, John, for reviewing all those fz, and esp. for those plaudits re "And." - Pete deserves it, I think, for making his first issue a success. ear'ear Am looking forward to all the conreports appearing in the British fanmags... inc SD ! Hit 'em hard, boy! They certainly deserve it" we've censored ours, Brian, out of regard for our fembers

***KEN SLATER "Now, on to the possible further polling- I'm all for it provided it gets wide circulation. How about some really useful sort of info. you can pass on to the publishers: a) Are you a member of the SFBook Club (Sidgwick & Jackson) b) if not, were you discouraged from joining by i) the three listed titles ? ii) the cost? c) List five titles you would like to see published by this club, assuming that you are a member, or that you would join if these were published. And then you could pass the details on to Mr Jones, and may-be do him a bit of good-and yourself too ! Optional sections, by all means. I'd like to see what gets the vote on the best f'zine, too. I'm a little tired of seeing Walt Willis heading a list.... all due respect to him, he is rather living on a reputation these days, I feel. One Slant a year ! Films, too, although I don't see any...." Like to hear some opinions on this *** ORVILLE MOSHER "Any chance for me to get S.D. Vol. 2, No. 2 etc.? I've finished reading the round robin pt. IV-- -- and blast it ! -- I've just got to find out what happens next !" you probably have by now, Orv, haven't rec'd that list copy yet, am "That the managerial class has found some way to stay young. Either a remarkable longevity, or immorality." BRE "If No. 1

typing this on Dec.13th, should be here soon ? *** ALAN HUNTER " I most certainly do wish to keep the Symposium, and to prove it I have enclosed a P.O. for 2/-. Keep the change. Don's drawings in the Sym. were superb (he is rapidly rivalling Harry Turner for fz. art), but it seems to have affected his output for S.D.... I was as interested to learn the purpose of the E of C Panel, as I was to learn the socio-logical significance of sex and it's application to s-f. Yes, a most timely, intelligent and absorbing subject for a one-shot. Bravo !"

".....I mean they aren't gardening magazines, or Searing Confessions"

***GEORGE CLEMENTS "Dear John, SD6 was very diverting. On page 2 you 'plug' my MAGAZINE COLLECTOR and ask fandom to rally to its support. On page 21 you publish some scathing remarks about fandom I had made in a private letter to Norman. tsk. tsk. I suggest you rename the letter column THE BLABBERMOUTH. Glad to see you propose changing the cover illo. I have often wondered whose hands were clutching at whose dew-drop (sniff). Yours deVOIDly. George. P.S. this letter is for publication ALL of it." Well George, I edit this column, quite independently of John, and nothing is private in fandom unless specifically requested, when, with ethical unfannishness, we will refrain from airing such statements. Okay ?

***W.F. HALLIWELL "I saw your advert in "nebula" is it a serious paper or a Flash Gordon comic? I belong to the S.M.E.E. also the newcome society for the study of the history of Engineering also the Institute of patentees. I have a America degree of Bsc. at Washington national University Chicago: Do you know if Fantasy times is a serious newspaper? The above (verbatim) letter was greeted

"..she didn't know whether to come to the meeting, or do the ironing" with enthusiasm at the Dive, as it was written in purple ink, on paper headed "Wolsey Hall, Oxford Subject--Philosophy". Apparently we are being investigated ?

***FRANK PARNELL "Special comment on Stan Nuttall's aticle..IT's rather difficult to do as he suggests when dealing with future settings, to attain an air of authenticity and plausibility with characters acting and speaking in accordance with their position in time. It's infinitely harder to get an editor to believe you have succeeded."

*** PAUL ENEVER " I am not at all sure that I am amused

".....with the aid of his good friend Harold Turner and Dianetics" by your choice of nicknames for dear AndROMeda. After all, I am its ass editor, dontcha know. Next thing you'll be calling it STINKER. Maybe after No.2

No, we must have some friendly competition! ...I don't believe Stan's premise is tenable. I agree that human mores and conventions WILL change through each generation and it cannot be denied that in certain types of story such changes must be accepted and made use of. But I feel that to postulate a whole series of new customs and habits may be a clever tour-de-force, but it will not necessarily improve the entertainment value of the story. There are very few Vict-

"How old are you blokes who run fanzines ?"

-orian novels that are now readable - we regard them as stilted and their characters as more-or-less farcical, BECAUSE our customs have changed since then and we cannot therefore identify ourselves with those same characters. Does Stan suppose it will be any easier to identify ourselves with the heroes of the future, if their reactions and customs are alien ? Did 1984 seem REAL to him ? It didn't to me. However, this is not to detract from the interest of the article, merely to disagree with it, which is much more fun than murmuring "How true!"

true! Incidentally, who first raised the present cry for more human interest in sf ? I should have thought one of sf's advantages was that it was not over-burdened with soul-searching. Let's have some good honest machinery and a few more clever gadgets and leave the

"Argosy is pubbing a Bradbury and a science fiction story every month"

human interest to True Confessions." /Yup, fr'instance the lead novel-ette in last December's aSF? /***PHIL CAKEBREAD "...other people I want to read more of are Frederic Brown, Arthur C., H.B. Fyfe, and one of these days, when I feel a little stronger, I'll read some more Asimov. It's "Everyone tells me I'm one of the greatest letter-hacks around to-day!" funny, one person I can't understand people raving over is VV. He just leaves me cold -I don't know how many corns I've trodden on so far /inc. mine /...I don't really like Bradbury either, but the man fascin-ates me /get him! /***PAUL MITTELBUSCHER "...I have no idea how many American zines you receive but from John Roles' comments not a lot "it seems that every fan on the face of the earth however receives Q." it seems that every fan on the face of the earth however receives Q... ..at least ALL English (and most other foreign fen) speak of the "latest Q"...there are a goodly number of excellent zines which you "diaps" (Spoken like a true Britisher wouldn't you say?) /Rahly? /apparently have never seen..." / We receive quite a good selection now, Paul, but we should like to see VEGA / ***MAL ASHWORTH "Many thanks for sd and that superb symposium. After having read them I have not recovered from the state of open eyed admiration from when I received them. (This makes it darned awkward to sleep at nights). Seriously though I enjoyed them both tremendously and consider the symposium a very important event in fandom. Anyway I should like to receive more of SD and if possible to become an extra-Liverpudlian bumpkin, or member of your peasant community. I enclose 7/6d P.O. and hope that residing in a magnificent metropolis economically, culturally, and socially acons in advance of

* "We are planning a revival of Canadian Fandom" your quaint little fishing village won't debar me from becoming a Country Member of the Liverpool sf Society... Anyway, if there are any little formalities to fulfill before ordination such as sending you a copy of my birth certificate /yes /bankers reference, /yes, yes! / and a photo of Marilyn Monroe /Slurp! / or performing a dance with lighted candles on my arms as an initiation rite please let me know..

* "Could you persuade Walt Willis to do something for us?" I don't know whether you still need any contributions for SD or not, or whether even then you want the enclosed. Anyway you can read it and if its of any use to you use it by all means. / Todology, thish. / it is an 'exposition of a wonderful new science' which I have discovered for the benefit of mankind /fankind? / and with the right kind of build up might delude some innocent gullible fan up to the last paragraph. After that maybe they won't believe in it any longer, I dunno." *** HARRY TURNER "Dear Gnowman. Next time I raid Philip's armoury before I proceed L'poolwards! /Then I must put that ad. in on page 103/ "...otherwise the screen would be blank"

SD Contents - nothing really sticks out in my mind as arousing great interest. That may be due to a certain unfannish outlook that dismisses fan polls as a waste of time... I did derive a certain fiendish enjoyment from Rayer's queer belief that the duty of fans is to write to pro-mag editors just to let them know which stories they like. But then maybe Rayer, as an author, has an axe to grind? That call to duty almost gives me an idea for 'Advice to neofans'... Yrs Arry" / only 'almost' Harry? / ***PAT DARRELL "I am very much a neo-fan: I am somewhat confused about it all! Dave seemed wrapped up in sf, whereas Harry T. hardly seemed interested. As I have some experience of market research I think it would be an amusing and entertaining job to try out a survey on fandom: it would certainly enlighten me a little as to the reasons for its being!.. my contacts are so few that I could hardly embark on such a project myself... Harry suggested that we might get together on this.." /Thanks, Pat, for the rest of your letter too, I'm quite willing to co-

-operate with you on this. Suggest you prepare a draft of your idea for the questionnaire ? WAW suggested something on this line last year in a letter about the SF Poll. Nothing has been done about it yet.... I also see a reference to a fan research bureau in the No. three AndROMeda, but I wouldn't know about that / and now another missive from MAL ASHWORTH "...Poll O.K. (How about a poll on promag covers during the past year?) / why? / 'Takes three to botch a Fanzine'- that's the thing-multiply the humour and pile on the corn, and I mean that. A note to Dave. By all means let's grow up in S.F.

".....;and it later attacked some navel installations..." but why go only half way and stick at blasphemy ? Why not be completely realistic and run the whole gamut of obscenity etc. as well? In reply to your query about Derek. Well physically he's O.K. I guess & beyond that I daren't say much for a coupla reasons: a) He's somewhat bulkier than I am and doesn't live two miles away, b) I did once hear he's a BNF. Now who told me ? probably that Pickles character?. and even if he's an obsolete BNF he might 'Blast' me in 'Zenith' or something equally horrible and devastating. Off the record the last I

" Were you hiding in the pillar-box or something?" saw of him he was reading about Lord Peter Wimsey (or somesuch), starry eyed South Sea maidens and had become a fan of Billy the Kid - no kid.....P.S. One more point - Why doesn't someone organize a get-together between boy and girl fen, and call it a Neck-romanti-con ? / on your last ~~xxx~~ query I can only refer you to Terry Jeeves, and his letter in Hifen 5. /

That winds it up for this time, going to chance another letter? or your first one ? Incidentally if you do, yeds would like to have your ratings on this. We will also welcome contributions of all shapes and sizes, and if it's possible rejection that deters you, I would mention that one of the items in this number was a reject from another fanzine, whilst another item we rejected has since been accepted (and printed) by a promag. (remember it's Nos. 3, 5, & 6 of MAD that are wanted.)

Note to BILL VENABLE has that Nuttall character written to you yet about our offer ?

Clear your obs with FAN WAMPUM

Interlineations: Pat Darrell, Bryan Berry (in Authentic), BRE 'If' No. 1, C. Harris, Stan Nuttall, B.D.R.P. Co. leaflet, Phil Cakebread, Ditto, Paul Mittelbuscher, ditto, Tom Owens, ditto, B.B.C., Andromeda 3, Archie Mercer, and Orv. Mosher (obtainable, or so I am told, from Ken Slater, mit S.A.E.)

See you in S.D.8 (contained in a crate),

Norman

SPACE DIVERSIONS is published by Norman Shorrocks and Dave Gardner, from 12A Rumford Place Liverpool 3.

FREE to all members and country-members of the LIVERPOOL SCIENCE-FICTION SOCIETY.

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Extra copies of this issue(No.7) will be charged at 2/- each(if available), for the following reasons. a) the materials cost us more than this on this large issue, and b) the funds are low(as usual!)

P L E A S E N O T E

Items for 'Here and There' and Society correspondence to: David S. Gardner, 63 Island Road, Liverpool 19.

Articles, stories etc. for publication should be sent to: John Roles, 26 Pine Grove, Waterloo, Liverpool 22.

Subscriptions, exchanges, and letters of comment to: Norman Shorrocks, 12A Rumford Place, Liverpool 3.

S.D.7

" L I V E R P O O L ' S A N S W E R
T O T H E L A K E L A N D E R S "

THE CANDIDATES.

PETER CAMPBELL Peter is one of our leading fanzine publishers -- of the over 100 pages of the first two issues of ANDROMEDA. He belongs to at least two fan clubs and is originator of one of them. He corresponds widely and is well known to many American fans. He attends British Conventions. He works hard for fandom -- all fans who have joined OPERATION FANTAST since he took charge of the Greetings Group and Contact Bureau know the results of his efforts. Finally, he is capable of representing us without disgracing us. He is quiet spoken, well mannered, personable, and can turn a slick phrase when necessary. (K.F.Slater)

VINCE CLARKE Vinç is both the obvious choice and the best one we could make. A leading fan for over 12 years, he has in fact been our representative whenever we needed one most -- as when he organised our phenomenally successful campaign against ASTOUNDING's exorbitant subscription rate increase. Less well known are the generous help and encouragement he has quietly given to countless new fans. He is also admittedly England's best fan writer, well known in America too through QUANDRY, an authority on everything to do with sf and fandom, a witty and interesting conversationalist and, incidentally, a very likeable person. He is a representative we could be proud of, who could give a good account of himself in America and a good account of it to us afterwards. (G.Charters)

WALTER GILLINGS Few words are necessary in support of nominating both MIKE ROSENBLUM Walter Gillings and Mike Rosenblum as possibles for the 1953 San Francisco Convention. Both have top claim (in different ways), to being Founder Members of today's British fandom, for without either it would undoubtedly have taken quite a different turn, or perhaps never flourished. Both were ardent and active fans as long ago 1937 when the first British Convention was held. Both have recently returned to activity after a few years absence whilst their business lives were soundly organised. To Walter goes the honour of striving long to put British Sf on a sound basis professionally and in producing what is still the most outstanding fanmag of all time -- FANTASY REVIEW. To Michael goes the honour of having held the nucleus of British fandom together during the war under almost impossible conditions, from which the post-war seeds sprouted rapidly and flourished. Both have prior claims, with knowledge and experience of events in this country over the past 20 years, to be the logical choice to represent this country at a World Convention. Either will make a worthy ambassador and raise our prestige even higher than it already is in America. (E.J.Carnell)

DEREK PICKLES Pickles, as editor of the late lamented PHANTASMAGORIA, showed himself as a fan without malice; willing to work for fandom without any desire to use his magazine to indulge in harsh criticism of other fans. His efforts were so typical of the average fan that he would probably make a very wide circle of friends in America among the normal fans. Friendships that would endure long after the conventional fireworks were forgotten. The future of fandom depends on the interest of thousands of fans like Derek, who can never aspire to challenge Gold or Carnell, so let these fans be represented by one who never once wrote an unkind word in the mistaken belief that it was clever. (A.V.Clarke)

TONY THORNE Tony is a fan, an active one; he gets things done. He has personality. He can speak in public. He's well known on both sides of the Atlantic. He runs a fanzine and he knows how to write for it. Also he runs a fanclub. All of this adds up to an impressive total. To add a little weight, he's had his picture in ILLUSTRATED and is possibly therefore Britain's most widely known fan. Tony, I think, has the best combination of talents and would be our best choice. The Medcon will demonstrate everything I've said about Tony to be no overstatement. Let Thorne go to Frisco! (F. Robinson)

JAMES WHITE As Ken Slater cannot make it, James is the best candidate we have. He's a likeable, friendly person, without any of the traditional British hauteur. He's no stuffed shirt, Giant Intellectual or Organisation Genius -- he's just an ordinary fan, representative of us all. He's been an active fan since 1948 and is widely known both here and in the States. The recent 'Beacon' Report showed not only how well he would get on with the Americans, but how well he could write it all up for us afterwards. Let's send James: we couldn't do better -- they'll all like him as much as we do. (C.Harris)

B A L L O T F O R M

This form must be mailed to reach : - Walter Willis, 170, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, N. Ireland before the 31st March, 1954.

Please number the following candidates 1 to 7 in order of your preference:

Peter Campbell	Derek Pickles	
Vince Clarke	Mike Rosenblum.....	James White.....
Walter Gillings.....	Tony Thorne	

I enclose/have sent the sum of..... as a contribution to the Fund,

(Signed).....

(Address).....

Please indicate what fan club you belong to or fanzine you have contributed or subscribed to, and the name of the person to whom reference may be made.

.....
.....

CONTINGENCIES: It's possible that neither the winner or the runner-up might be able to go after all and Willis would like your views as to what should be done with the money in that event. Please number the following alternatives in order of preference. If you have no particular opinion please just leave this part blank.

A. Offer it to candidate No.3.....	F. Carry the project over to
B. Go down the list as far as No.4.....	the next US Convention and
C. Go down the list as far as No.5.....	hold another vote.....
D. Go down the list as far as No.6.....	G. Invite an American fan to the
E. Go down the list as far as No.7.....	next British Convention.....

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