

VAGARY 15

STOP PRESS

We have just seen a film called "The Day The Earth Caught Fire," which extrapolated a possible future in which two too many bigger and better bangs were tested. Need I specify the two countries which carried out the tests? Apart from some minor technical faults, the film showed an all too possible future - and should be compulsorily shown to the politicians of all the countries which have tested nuclear bombs. In 90 minutes the film made more impression on me than the CND has made since its inception. The CND has irritated the public, and to some extent alienated its sympathy, by disturbing its peace. The film has made a far greater impression on public by disturbing its peace of mind. By not disrupting transport, organising protest marches, or attempting to immobilise our very necessary defences in this modern age (which would be sabotage or treason in a time of war) as the CND has done, the film has succeeded where the CND has failed. It is too horribly close to the truth to be called propaganda and its points are emphasised because as well as showing us a possible nasty truth, it entertains as well as making one think. Paul Hammett is in the CND because, as a doctor, he knows what these tests can do to men's bodies. Canon Collins is in the CND because he fears - quite rightly - what the tests can do to men's souls. This film shows how the tests can warp men's minds, apart from disrupting their lives. Incidentally, members of the local CND group were outside the cinema with leaflets, which they offered quite politely. Because they were polite and sensible I accepted one - if they behave reasonably I have no objection to them expressing their opinions. If, however, they had been cluttering up the pavement with one of their stupid sit-down strikes, I would have been strongly tempted to have kicked them out of the way and stuffed the leaflets down their throats. It all depends on the approach, you see. But I still won't give even five shillings for nuclear disarmament. When they talk about total disarmament I will be interested - if the United States, Russia and China start it off honestly.

Spring 1962

VAGARY 15. Published for the Off Trail Magazine Publishing Association by Roberta Gray, 14 Bennington Street, Cheltenham. Glos. Originally intended for the 30th Mailing, then as a post mailing to the 30th, then as a premailing to the 31st. With luck it will make the 31st mailing (I hope)

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THIS AND THAT

(Which is a sort of combination editorial, talking point, mailing comment and general natter)

I shall have to do it this way to make the next mailing and still try to mention member's magazines. I'll try and remember to put the name of the zine in capitals so that members who are only interested in what was said about their magazine won't have to wade through all the flow of words. But before I start commenting on the magazines.....

Firstly, I am not going into long explanations of why this issue never made the last mailing and may only just make this one. Let it be said that one of the many reasons was caused through the recent bad weather and the blockage of the down pipe of the printers next door, which for some reason soaked the wall and flooded my study instead of their premises, rot them! We watched the water pouring and pouring in, helpless as Canute to stem the tide. "Perhaps we should have an ark," suggested Bill. So I narked - and narked - and narked. So did the cat, who considers my study as her boudoir, and took the flood as a personal affront.

Even by the cunning method of getting Bill to write the witchcraft articles did not help me to make the mailing. (Incidentally, the articles have been vetted and passed by a white witch of our acquaintance). The result is, that I am now doing something that I dislike doing - writing straight on to stencil. One of these days I will get a Vagary out without a single typo. Oh, frabjous day. Besides, the awkward thing about writing straight on stencil is that one is liable to forget what one was

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COUNTDOWN

My first reaction to the 30th Mailing was one of disappointment, which only goes to show how one good mailing, followed by a skinny one, can be very discouraging. However, though a small mailing, it was good, and the postmailings have bumped up the page count. Personally, I would rather see as many magazines as possible in the mailing proper, but I do realise that quite a number of members cannot make this owing to their geographical location. In any case, I have started this issue so late I may have to end up postmailing myself - a thing I have never yet done, but there is always a first time. Now to the mailing proper.

ZOUNDS (Lichtman) One thing that can be seen clearly from reading this is that you do care for OMPA and what happens to it, and that you doing your best to keep it alive and kicking. I try occasionally, but what surprises me is that quite often I put out feelers to get the members going on something, and they choose to discuss something I've almost forgotten I wrote and all write about that instead. So last time I went to town on everything I could think of that should have raised outraged cries from some, and maybe even induced a long silent member to whinny with rage or something and turn out a magazine in reply./ I am not going to list my library - it would take far too long, but a few of the authors might interest you. Homer, Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Plato, Livy, Plutarch, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Caesar, Cicero, Tacitus, Suetonius, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Gibbon, Toynbee, Trevelyan, Graves, Huxley, etc. My books on history, mythology and allied subjects run into nearly three hundred, and those are but a part of a pile which includes poetry, technical books, historical novels, whodunits, science fiction and general fiction. There is also a Teach Yourself book on Ancient Greek - if Gibbon won't translate those filthy footnotes in the Decline and Fall, I'll learn Greek and translate the damned stuff myself. I am sorry you won't have time to put out an issue this size every time, but keep up the interest, anyway.

PARAFANALIA. (Burn) Yes, I'm sorry I missed the SFCL sketch - I still wish it had been presented on Saturday evening. I will comment on your voyage on when you have finished describing it. Trying to review a serial always frustrates me.

MORPH (Roles) And welcome back, John. For a time I was worried in case yet another vertebra had slipped from the backbone of OMPA./ As for coarse words - a modern author has written a most scathing book about modern dustbin drama - he makes the

hero of this book a writer who specialises in this type of thing. The book is called "Just for the Record" by Stanley Price, published by Michael Joseph. If anyone wants to succeed as purveyor of dreariness and dirt the formula is in there. Anyway, I think the test of good writing is something that can be vigorous without having to fall back on the limited vocabulary of filth. If an author cannot do that he is not using his brain and misusing his talent - if any. To my mind, this reliance on filthy words shows a poverty of imagination and if imagination is used then the words aren't needed. Angus Wilson's "Old Man of the Zoo" is a case in point. One gets the impression that he wrote the book, then thought "I'd better get on the bandwagon and stick in filth on every other page." It was quite superfluous to the story, yet when he was describing the poor wretch who caught dysentery he used correct English to describe the symptoms. / I agree with you about Eric Frank Russell - he is a story teller and, what's more, he never subordinates his human characters to the machines - Jay Score excepted. / No, I didn't know that the last witchburning took place in Britain in 1890 - what place in Ireland was it? / I have read Benoit's "Queen of Atlantis", but not, oddly enough, Haggard's "She" - it was one of those books I always intended to read, but somehow never did - so I can't compare. However, I must re-read Benoit and try to find a copy of "She" - I'm sure I've seen it in a paperback. Now that you are in the book trade, let me know if you have anything you think will interest me - I'll willingly be one of your customers. / Ah, yes, your comments on the Church interested me exceedingly. The immaculate conception I never could swallow and have always taken the attitude that if Joseph wasn't Christ's father, another man was. Mary was a Temple Maiden and I believe the man who was supposed to have been her lover was a Greek legionary called Pantherus. As Mary belonged to the Temple it may have been a ritual union (as many Jews became Hellenised, so did a large number of Greek take to Judaism) and the result of the union would be regarded as a child of God, I suppose. In any case, does it really matter who Christ's father was? He did his best for humanity while he lived and a number of interested parties wrecked what he did after his death. As for the bodily assumption - the joke is that the Pope may have been right. If you recall, when the disciples were asked what had happened to Mary, they said she had gone to Paradise and the it was quite likely that they meant this literally and not spiritually. Perhaps you know the legend that Joseph of Aramitheia came to Britain and founded the Christians' first permanent church at what is now called Glastonbury. Once it was called Avalon, the Celtic Paradise. Joseph was reputed to have brought Mary with him and the legend is that she died and was buried in Glastonbury. In legends where there is a basis of truth they persist and that one has certainly persisted in Glastonbury. So the Pope may have been right when he spoke of the bodily assumption of Mary into Paradise. His error was in thinking of the wrong Paradise.

All Glastonbury has to offer, apart from its legends, is a holy well, a Tor, and a ruined Abbey, yet one can feel a "different" atmosphere when one is approaching the town. Most of the older OMPA members know that I am not religious, but I have been in the Abbey grounds and the Lady Chapel, which is the best preserved, and I have felt the atmosphere myself. It is very peaceful, but not a negative peace. Whenever I have been in Glastonbury I have always had the feeling of standing between two worlds and I am not the only one who has felt that. Countless people we have met there have said the same. But Glastonbury is worth more than a passing mention and in some future issue I must try and get in an article about it.

HUNGRY (Rispin). The parts of this that were good were very good, i.e. Mercer and yourself, but I am not in the least impressed by beats. However, since Eric Dentcliffe has said what there is to say about them I have no need to elaborate on his excellent analysis of the jerks./ Frankly, I don't see what the fact of Princess Margaret liking jazz has to do with s.f. - I'd be surprised if she were interested in s.f., so the non-sensical parallel falls down straight away. S.f. fans having everything in common with jazz, my --- dammit! Now I want to use a naughty word! I have no objection to an s.f. fan being a jazz fan, but I do not think there is any comparison. Jazz is mainly for extroverts in my view, and I suspect, apart from break outs at conventions a number of fans are introverts. If we weren't, we wouldn't be using up ink and paper saying things to each other; we'd be right in there pitching and telling the world our opinions - fandom is too limited a circle. People may get the impression that all s.f. fans dig jazz (or is my slang behind the times?), but that is because those who do are vociferous about it. I wonder how many fans there are who like other types of music. Does it follow that because Prince Philip is interested in science fiction that he is also a cool cat, or whatever the term is these days? I don't particularly care whether anyone likes or dislikes jazz, out of those who do, why do they get so neurotic because a few of us don't like it? Oh, well, I suppose if I paused for a think I could remember a few things about which I get neurotic.

CONVERSATION 13. The infamous copy! Well, well! Hal Shapiro's column was certainly a diatribe on seconnishness. Why was he so sercon about it, though? As for that word! Naturally, after all the complaining I've done I just couldn't wait to see what the word was. I tried looking at it under ultra-violet but all I got was a headache. Eventually, Bill had to rake out some of his equipment and I found out what the word was by black light. My reaction was "Might have guessed it was something like that!" Then Bill wanted to know why I was chuckling. It wasn't the word, but after all the trouble to

which I had gone to find out what it was I suddenly reminded me of the old lady in the joke. I expect most of you know it, but the old dear complained to the police that from her kitchen she could see a completely naked man shaving in the bathroom across the road every morning. The police came round and watched from the old lady's kitchen, then asked why she was kicking up such a fuss as all they could see was the head and shoulders of the man and there was nothing naughty about that. "Try standing on my kitchen table," was the old lady's reply.

JETSTREAM. (Linwood). Yes, I have noticed the number of young fen wearing CND badges, but I expect most of them will grow out of it. Young people always like to think that they marked out from others by their daring nonconformity, but actually they conform more than any other group- if they didn't there wouldn't be so many wearing CND badges or acting "beat" like mad. It is quite natural to want to "belong" and the CND can combine sitting on their silly backsides and beatism. Why, before you know what's happened the young fen will meet someone they want to marry and they will be much too busy to think of the CND or beats. I said marry - isn't it a beat habit to go from partner to partner? Like, man, the beat poet(!) goes from bed to verse./Leopold and Loeb deserved all they got - they killed a kid in cold blood just for the hell of it./ I liked your little article on the Alamo, but if Davy Crockett invented all those legends he probably was an extrovert. I don't know if you have read it, but about the time of the Alamo Centenary an author called H. Bedford Jones wrote a book called "Dead Men Singing," which was about various characters who took part in the siege.

AMBLE (Mercer). You ought to be mauled for that Maud pun. Margaret Kennedy wrote one of the best sellers of the Thirties called "The Constant Nymph." Really, Archie, I thought RUNE was a Wansborough magazine. Surely you are not hinting that Mal Ashworth is responsible for it. 'Tis a vile canard. And before I forget, many thanks for the gen you sent me on the books mentioned in your previous issue. As for the haunted camp, see my review of Scottishe and Bletherings.

SCOTTISHE AND BLETHERINGS (Lindsay) You deserve a medal for managing to keep Walt going on his early history. But I must confess to feeling a little disappointed with MaciaVarley on Camp Dazy. When you wrote and told me about it I quite looked forward to seeing it, but although it is good, it isn't quite as good as I thought it was going to be. I think he could have put more satire in it./ As for part 2 of the article on Camp Crazy not being so eerie as the first part - if you recall, I stopped halfway through the article as I was reliving it and brought back too many memories and gave the screaming habdabs again. So for the second part I tried to disassociate myself, stood "outside" myself

as it were, and tried to write it as though I were watching from a distance. Perhaps one or two people did think of exorcism, but no doubt held back in case they were told they were fools and laughed at. I did not expect as many comments as there has been about the article, although the reaction was as much as I expected it would be. However, if it has moved at least one member to put out a magazine to comment it has served a useful purpose./ I believe somewhere in the last issue of Vagary I said that I believed in a Power - an impersonal power which can be tapped and used for good or evil according to the ability and character of the person who does the "tapping". The church liturgies and rituals are a form of tapping - for some reason or other certain words put together in a certain way concentrate forces. One can have faith in good overcoming evil or vice versa - again depending on the type of person. An appeal to the power to do something for or against someone is either a prayer or a curse. It all depends on which side of the fence you are on. Possibly the spiritual part of us eventually blends with the power - we can be part of Order or part of Chaos.. However, I am not very well up on spiritual things and this, of course, is my own theory. I suppose another name for the power would be a universal balance, with scales gradually dropping in favour of good, one hopes./ No, Ethel, Wray is not a mouse like little man and I shouldn't waste your time feeling sorry for him. He is fairly tall, darkish, with slightly wavy hair, I suppose one could say he was good looking in a rather repulsive way, hornrimmed specs, and he looks very prosperous. His type will always look prosperous as long as there is one born every minute.

SIZAR (Burn) I liked your poem about the cat - you must be a close observer of our master race. But the mailing comments were much too bitty. You can do a lot better, as you proved in a previous Sizar. By the way, if you ever go to the Cheddar Gorge do go into the garage there. They have a couple of veteran cars on show and they keep them beautifully.

WALDO (Bentcliffe) The part of this appreciated most, of course, was your crisp remarks anent the beats. You have put into words what I have not managed to do and perhaps you would be interested in the book I mentioned further back. In another book called "Ripe for the Plucking" by Oliver Anderson, is a comment on teenage beats. The scene is a pub-cum-roadhouse and a group of teenage beats are lounging about "their tiny addled brains irritating their lusty young bodies like a bit of gravel in a hot sock." Anderson, by the way, is being called the modern Wodehouse, but there is no comparison. He is extremely funny, but his people are the people of today, and he can be very penetrating. For instance: "The village presented its normal summer evening appearance. There wasn't a

soul in sight - they were all indoors worshipping at the altar of the modern new god - television." / Your vacation tale was very interesting - especially the driver who went on strike - and I'm sure that there must be more members who also have interesting stories to tell about their vacations.

ERG (Jeeves) I think this is the magazine that deserves top marks of the mailing. What a labour of love it must have been and what an amount of information packed into it. Until I read this zine I had no idea that so much stuff had been shot into space. And those illos - I could chew the carpet with envy. Congratulations on a very fine issue, Terry.

OPHIDIAN (Hansen) And welcome to the fold, Chuck. As for description, I don't think I've ever given one. Anyway, I'm tall, dark and deadly, 5'6" about 116 lbs, and am what my friends call slim because they are too polite to say downright skinny. Thin face and dark wavy hair which goes in every direction it can think of. Amateur publishing seems to be my main hobby now and occasionally embroidery. The latter always surprises the people who know me for some reason. Once when I had time I played cricket, hockey and used to go to Bisley for the shooting - two points behind the WRAF champion the last time I was there./As for the story of the camp, if I had been writing fiction I wouldn't have mentioned one incident after another - I'd have used each incident for a different story. Your magazine is going to be an asset to the mailings if you keep up the promise of this issue.

PACK RAT (Groves). This is a small but thought provoking issue and now I'm annoyed with myself for leaving this issue so near the deadline, as from your zine you are a deep observer. I should like to do a lot of commenting on this, but it will need a lot of space and time, the latter of which is getting in dangerously short supply for me at the moment. As for the spots that I mentioned, one is Iona, the other is Glastonbury, and very, very rarely the steps leading down into Villiers St. from Charing Cross Station - of all places! I once experienced the "Difference" there for about a second of time and saw "London" beyond London. It is something that I hope to describe more fully in a later issue. But I did wonder if Francis Thompson had had some sort of experience there which inspired him to write the line about Jacob's Ladder pitched betwixt Heaven and Charing Cross.

ROPE OF SAND (Jordan) Well, Brian, instead of going deeply into the subject of the Congo with you, I suggest that you buy the pocket book "Congo Disaster". On the other hand, perhaps you have read it and we have each drawn different conclusions from it./ No, if Camp Crazy had been built on a semi-volcanic site with the attendant gasses coming up through fissures, we'd have known it. We did try to find a natural explanation, you know, before

facing the fact there wasn't one. And it wasn't a bat that touched my face, either. I would have heard it (my bad sight is compensated by extremely good hearing), and seen it the moment the light went on./ I have seen the Gestelith you mentioned demonstrated and was fascinated, but how many fans have £1,000 to lash out?/ I also noted your comments on the increasing popularity of cider. What I have also noted is the increasing reports of drunkenness among teenagers./ As for the comments on the CND sitdown strike, did you read in the papers what Bertrand Russell did when a couple of the CNDers staged a sitdown strike on his doorstep? He sent for the police and they were both fined £5 each. And Russell was the one who encouraged civil disobedience in the first place. In other words, he doesn't care how much he disrupts the movements of ordinary citizens who have done him no harm, but nobody must disturb his comfort. And I wonder how many sycophants he would have if he hadn't got a title?

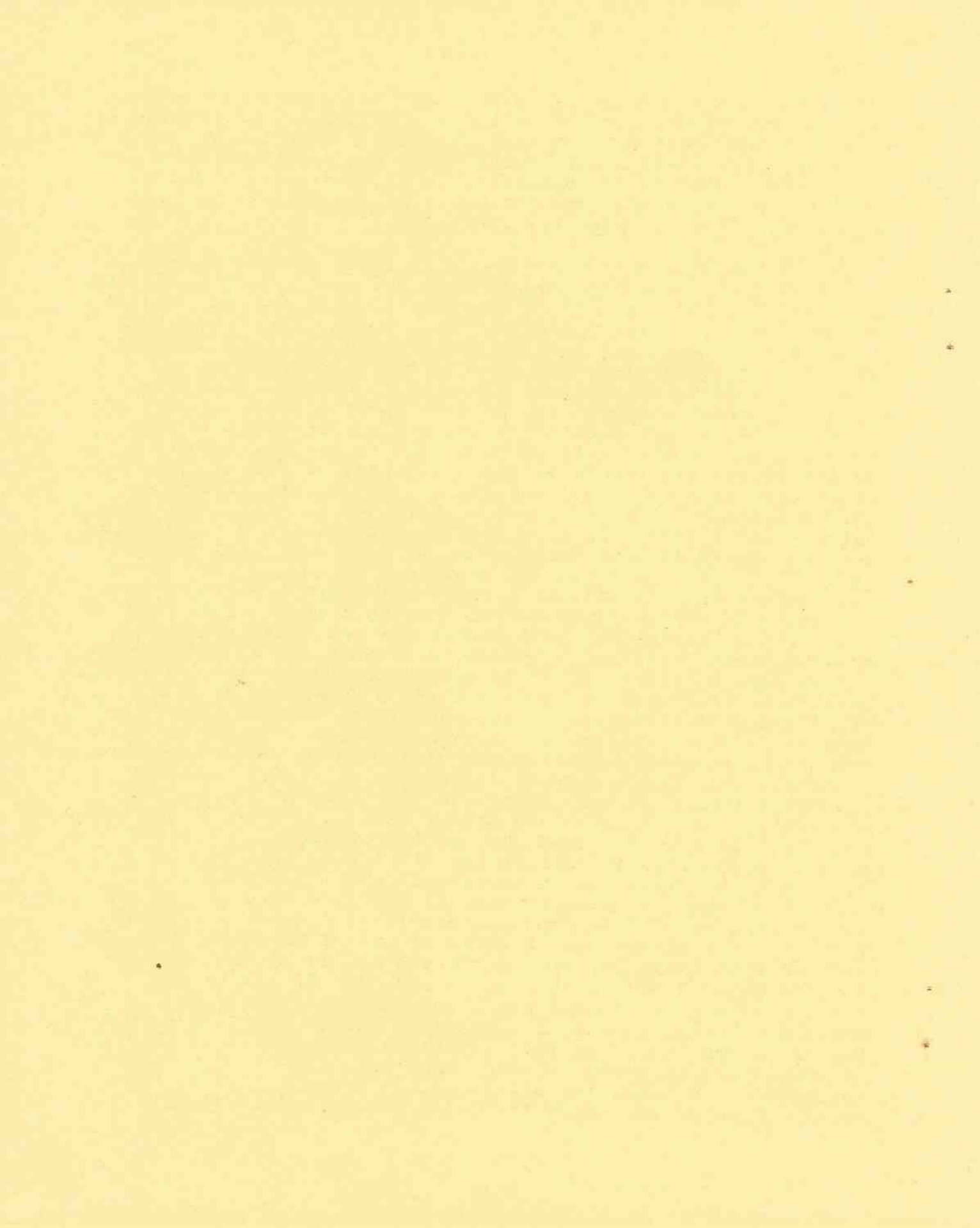
SUWWAYA (Main). I don't find much to comment on in this zine, except that the remarks some of the male members have passed on the RANDOM nudes have rather amused me. Why are the men so appalled at a nude? From a book called the "Evil Eye" I read recently I gather that men can be more visually excited than women, and it is so in my case. Mostly pictures of nudes leave me completely unmoved - even male nudes. In fact, the only time I can remember recoiling from nudes was in the National Gallery a long time ago. For the first time I saw "The Judgment of Paris", and although the detail in the picture was most beautifully executed, the three sides of beef in the middle made me cringe. If that was Rubens' idea of the three most beautiful goddesses, I'd have hated to see his idea of the others. It would have been more to the point if the painting had been re-labelled "Smithfield Meat Market." And that remark should start something./ So many of you really young fans talk of yourselves as virile and sex-starved. What are you all trying to do? Impress others or convince yourselves?/ If you only do mailing comments out of sheer laziness why do you bother with them at all?

UNICORN (Spencer). This is a fascinating issue and although you say writing demoralizes you, what you do put down is well-written. I am inclined to agree with your comments on doctors. Those who care in this country seem to be getting few and far between. Despite the fact we all pay each week towards the cost of the National Health Service, the attitude of the doctors keeps many sick people away from them. Of what use is it going to a doctor if you are treated like a damned mendicant or a hypochondriac? I once went sick with a frightful pain in my back. Because the X-ray plates didn't show up the fashionable slipped disc the doctor turned round and told me

I had a "psychological backache. What he meant, of course, was that I was winning the lead. Fortunately the other doctor, who was one of the old school, saw the report, sent for me, wanted to know who the hell had passed me as fit for overseas after looking at my medical history, and discovered that my "psychological" backache was a sprained sacro-iliac. But the first doctor's diagnosis is all too common these days, so truly sick people won't go to a doctor until their friends or relations force them, and the hypochondriac who has no pride continues to clutter up the surgeries. I wouldn't mind if the doctors turned round and said they could not be bothered - at least it would be honest, but when the attitude of "I couldn't care less" even creeps into the medical profession, one despairs. I may add that the foregoing is not a criticism of the doctor whose list I am on because I have never laid eyes on him since I've been in Cheltenham. Well, you are not the first person to write Britain's obituary and I don't suppose you will be the last. I seem to remember that Britain was written off in June, 1940, but she managed to go it alone for a few months. The demonstrators to whom you refer aren't trying to make Britain look like a world power - they are doing their best to cripple her. To me, and I am excluding the really sincere people like Canon Collins and Paul Hammet, ninety per cent of them are a fifth column. If Britain went to war and was conquered, no matter by what power, those spineless jerks would be the first to collaborate. But at least we know who our cowards are, since that ninety per cent so openly flaunt their lack of guts under a so-called banner of idealism. Britain is not subservient to the USA - for a start most of us did not want that damned loan. Since the U.S. has a far greater population on the surface it is more militarily powerful, but as for culture - well, I won't judge you on the incredibly ^{bad} taste that emerges from Hollywood as literature is a much better criterion by which to judge - frankly 85% of your literature stinks. It may also surprise you to know that a great many Britons would be only too happy for the U.S. to give up her bases in this country and for us to withdraw from N.A.T.O. Your Government's internal policy may be excellent, but her foreign policy is hopeless. It is the opinion of a number of us over here (I've been asking around) that your politicians are as much responsible for the cold war as the men in the Kremlin and we don't like being airstrip one. But if Britain is such a crumbling power, George, can you explain to me how it is that nearly a quarter of the world's population are entitled to British passports? That's what I meant when I said that on the surface the US was more militarily powerful. In any case, if your politicians want to run the world I don't suppose Britain would raise any objections, but your powers-that-be might remember that it can be cruel to be too kind. It ^{puts} people under a perpetual sense of obligation and in the end they are either filled with resentment because they can see no way to repay a moral debt or they lose their pride. Re your remarks about Camp Crazy - I gave enough

clues about the name of the camp. All you have to do is look up the German word for hallucination, delusion, mad, crazy, etc. I also pointed out that it was an unwritten law on the camp not to alarm new arrivals with tales about the camp - if they weren't affected by the atmosphere they need never know. A good 35% of the Waafs were not aware of anything amiss until Molly went round opening her big mouth.

VIPER (Donaho) I never know where to start on this zine - it is so good it takes your breath away and one is left wondering what can be said. All of it can't be covered and some things may be mentioned that the editor thought he would never hear about and other things that he hoped would call up a response are completely ignored. I have noticed that with Vagary. However, I do agree that, if possible, nothing should be put direct on stencil unless one is absolutely certain of what one is going to say and has thought it out carefully beforehand. I know I have been guilty of this, but it is usually when I am pushed for time - and if I'm not careful I will find myself doing it with this issue. I am, of course, always interested in the stories of your cats. Selina will never have kittens and I think she has taken up learning as a substitute. She can now spell four words - and to make sure that she can spell them and is not pulling them down by rote I have mixed the letters up. It will be a couple of years before she has a reasonable working vocabulary, but the moment I find that cat doing my crossword she's out on her ear. Re Sheckley's comment. Man is only a higher form of animal. To quote what I read somewhere "Man is still nearer to the ape than to God." Well, yes, of course, that is a thing a non-American finds amusing and also pathetic - the worship of the good red-blooded American male. If only your youngsters were allowed to approach sex normally instead of being harried into it before they are ready - it really is a great disservice to them. When the G.I.s were over here during the war they thought the British girls "dead easy", but sluts in any part of the world are easy, and I'm afraid that's what they mostly collected. I remember a Waaf coming into the billet one night full of indignation. "I didn't even lead him on to expect anything from me," she said, "and when he propositioned me and I refused all he said was 'Go on, it will only take a couple of minutes'. Did he think I was a damned street woman or one of those bitches who only go with Yanks for the cigarettes and candy they can get out of them. A couple of minutes indeed! If all he wanted to do was to relieve himself why didn't he find a hole in the wall instead of being so damned insulting. It wouldn't have been so bad if he had led up to it. If that's their attitude to sex no wonder all they can get over here is a slut who'd go with anybody." And that, I'm afraid, Bill, was the opinion of a great number of the women the G.I.s didn't make. I'm not



TALKING POINT

Those of you who read the mailing comments of the last Vagary will recall that I had some acid comments to make on the batch of fifteen year olds. Not long afterwards I read a Times report about the number of British and American children who are mentally retarded and the people who did the survey blamed this on the new theories of education which have been tried out, regardless of the fact that the three Rs have stood the test of centuries. But in the same issue of the newspaper I found something rather surprising and realised that at least one teacher somewhere has tried to teach his pupils to think as well as read and write. It was about the time of Russia's 50-megaton bomb test and Mr. Raymond Bishop, headmaster of St. Ann's Heath Primary School, Virginia Water, Surrey, heard some of his pupils talking about the dangers of radioactive milk, and decided to set them an essay. Below I give extracts from those essays. The headmaster pointed out that some of the children are critical of the Russian policy, also of the unilaterals, and some refuse to be frightened by the Kremlin's Mr. Bluster.

Boy, aged 9: A number of atome bombs have been exploded by the Russians, one more that 50 megatons. The most dangerous thing is the radioactive fall-out. It is like and invisible enemy, more ihvisible than Perseus with the helmet of darkness. The milk we drink and the vegetables we eat may look the same, but be very harmful. Even the air we breathe may no longer be healthy. There is nothing we cna do about the poison in the air, but we can, perhaps, clean the food and give the babies dried milk. I hore we can persuade the Russians to stop testing.

Boy, aged 10: It was a step nearer death when the Big Bomb was let off over the Arctic Sea. Once I saw in a book a place where one of the bombs had been let off in the desert. It will steadily kill all the animals that feed us, and poison the milk. So we will all die if they do not stop letting them off.

Boy, aged 10: Kruschev wantonly imperils the health of the human race and poisons the food of babies. I suppose he wants to frighten people, especially the neutral nations. Perhaps he was showing the Chinese what will happen to them if they don't behave.

Girl, aged 10: In years to come babies and animals may be born with two heads or things like that. You see, radioactivity can spoil things even before they are born. When I grow up I shall study hard and try to get a job that has to do with the Government. I would try and persuade the Government to stop the bombs being dropped.

Girl, aged 10: When my mother told me about the bomb, I was startled to think, "When I grow up, what will I do?" If every country uses the bomb there will be no world left, so let us hope that it will never happen.

Boy, aged 11: In a way the Russians are selfish because they are not only affecting other countries, but Russia, too. It is not fair to the little Russian children because they do not know what is going on.

Girl, aged 11: There are people who just live for the day when ^{war} will come and then they will be able to go and fight. But once they get on the battlefield I expect they will want to get off it. I have never experienced it (and I hope I don't), but I read a few stories about it.

Girl, aged 9: I suppose the Russians are trying to frighten us into doing just what they want. Well, they jolly well won't succeed.

Girl, aged 11: I think it is a very wicked thing to let off the bomb, but they will get it back on themselves.

Boy, aged 10: I wish the bomb was never invented by scientists.

Boy, aged 11: Anger starts all this, just like with children. I think they should all make peace. If one starts, the lot will.

Girl, aged 9: It's a great pity that all the money spent on making these terrible weapons could not be given to the poor.

Girl, aged 10: When I grow up I shall say, "Keep the Bomb", because other countries would be afraid to land one on us in case we drop one on them and put an end to them, too. Anyway, who wants to go and sit down outside Buckingham Palace saying, "Ban the Bomb"?

Girl, aged 10: The daily papers said that people sat on the ground in a "ban the bomb" movement, but it doesn't seem to have made much difference.

Girl, aged 10: Nervous people get very frightened about such things and may even become very ill. It is very wicked.

Girl, aged 10: Dear Mr. Khrushchev, kindly do not drop any more H-bombs, not only for my sake but for my children's as well, and for the sake of all the dear little Russian children, including your own grandchildren.

Boy, aged 10: The world is going crazy.

Girl, aged 10: I think it necessary to get the world to agree to stop these tests, as radio-active fall-out is bound in the end to threaten the whole human race. Other countries may think they must test bombs to keep up with the Russians.

Eventually we must get all countries to agree to abolish the bomb.

Girl, aged 10: I am not going to let myself worry about the bomb at all."

And that is what the children wrote. To me, it is the most terrible indictment of we older ones that I have ever read. On looking through the essays again I have noticed a curious omission. Nowhere do the children place reliance on a Higher Power - we have not even given them any sort of faith to fall back on. This may sound odd coming from me, but children should have something to which they can turn when the adults let them down - as they seem to have done very badly. Not only are we in the process of trying to destroy the physical world which they should inherit, but we have not even given them a spiritual world to draw strength from. Perhaps they did have faith once, but have become disillusioned too soon. That there are children left who have belief in something is proved by the following sad little letter, which was published in a weekly magazine. I can only hope that disillusionment comes to the little girl too gradually to harm her too much.

"Chimney Faith. When we were moving to another house and I cleared the fireplace in the old one, a piece of paper fluttered down. It was addressed to Jesus in Heaven.' It read, 'Dear Dad, I love you very much and my sister Juanita and my mum and grandad and nanna. We have moved to Hogarth Road. WE all love you. We still think about you. Good bye and God bless you.'" It was written by my daughter, aged eight. Her father had been killed in a car accident. What faith a child must have to leave a letter up the chimney for Jesus to collect! I never told her I had found it. Mrs. L.S. Ipswich."

In previous issues I have spilled a lot of acid about co-called "modern novels", but from what I have been reading lately the reaction has started to set in. Writers are now beginning to cry for clean wind through the world of literature, and writing very bitterly on those authors who, having no true talent are getting by on dirt, dirt, and more dirt. One man, D.L. Murray, in his book "Hands of Healing", has some penetrating remarks on the Welfare State. What has it brought, he asked. Not the brave new world we all hoped for, but hatred, class war, self-indulgence, the something for nothing boys and girls, the unwashed spiritually dead beats - the mediocrities who won't work as long as dear old Auntie Government will provide for them, and who pass off their plotless filth as great literature of genius.

My God! If the working class who genuinely worked read the untrue things these jerks said about them the latter would

be torn to pieces. But they do not offer anything to replace that which they have destroyed. They are the kings and queens of the manure heap. As D.L. Murray said, "In the land of the witless the moron is king." In a recent book I read a lovely comment on the attitude of modern authors, and I have written for permission to quote it.

But the authors who look upon themselves as the avant garde are very much behind the times. The people of whom they write vanished before the war - if they ever existed. And these same authors personally complain as though they had to struggle for existence, when in actual fact, they had allowances to get them through high school and university, and whose parents at least had a family allowance to keep them going. The people who wanted to study during the pre-war years, but could not, owing to the struggle for existence, are the ones who have the right to complain, but how often do you hear it from them. No, these so-called "modern" authors were given far more than any previous generation was given, and, of course, the first thing they did was bite the hand that fed them - once the something for nothing boys got what they wanted, they weren't going to vote Socialist again and run the risk of having to share with the have nots. Yet it is a sign of the time. They had everything handed to them on a plate and perhaps deep down their true protest is that they weren't given a chance to use their initiative or go ahead with a project on their own because the ever helpful Welfare State was there to save them the trouble of thinking or doing anything for themselves.

I have already said in another part of the magazine that I do believe in some sort of Power that can be used for good or evil, depending on the person involved, but how many of us have got even that? Materially, we have never had it so good. Spiritually, we have never had it so bad. I suppose in my heart of hearts I am an idealist, but I ^{am} also enough of a realist to know that the ideal world won't be built on the rubble of moral and ethical values that have stood the test of time.

In Vagary 14 I published a letter from Doreen Valiente and sent her a copy of the magazine. I received a letter from her in which she mentioned that she had gone to a meeting of the same group which we attended. At the time, their so-called "Divine Leader" was alive, and, like us, she wasn't very impressed. She goes on to say:

"I've been told, by the way, that the departed Leader died without imparting the secret knowledge he was supposed to possess to anyone, and this knowledge was supposed to include 'the names of the Angels.' So perhaps the four letter word was a

substitute!

"I'm very glad you're after the little Wray of moonshine. He once had the impertinence to write me a begging letter, maked "For Immediate Attention." I ignored it, and handed it over to Leslie for possible investigation. I think he must have seen my address in Peter Campbell's magazine.

"Talk about wacky letters! Not long ago I had a letter published in "Fate" about the research done at a German university into some of the old formulae for the Witche's Salve. My name and address appeared, and among some serious and interesting correspondence I received the following: 'Dear Madam, Saw your letter in Fate. Can you let me have the formula for the ointment you mention, and also could you let me have the address of the nearest witchcraft circle to myself. I should want the high priestess. I'm just aching to get into them fertility rites. My mother's a Neapolitan and here is a Neapolitan witche's song.' (Therefollowed the first verse of a very popular Italian song in Neapolitan dialect, "Maruzzell". I'm very interested to hear that it's a witches' song, as I have a record of it by the Marino Marini quartet!) The letter goes on: 'I am not a copper. I just want to be a sex mystic. I am 23. Yours truly, a fertile wizard. John Price.' The address on the letter was Stroud, Glos. On the back of the envelope was hand printed "ABRACADABRA". Have you any idea of the privilege you enjoy in living so close to this fertile wizard? I think he and Ivar Hand, Pronator, ought to get together, don't you? With the permission of Ipsissimus, of course. I didn't answer him."

Well, well! There's me nosing about all over the country and there's a wizard almost under my nose! H'm! I wonder what his reaction would be if he knew that if he travelled a few miles south he'd get all the witchcraft he could take in one of the four main "black" centres?

Last time round I spoke of a ritual meeting which Bill and I attended, and I mentioned three old sisters. About three months later we were in the same area again and talked with a woman who, like us, had attended the meeting out of curiosity. She, too, was disgusted by this so-called message, as were many others, including the old sisters. It seems that they were taken completely unawares by the tape message and Dracula's daughter, and are furious that this has crept into their sect. One of the ladies' son worked the tape recorder from outside the hall, so didn't hear what was going on through the mike. His mother wanted to hear the tape again as proof of a fiddle, but when her son went to play it back - not a sound! A few people, of course, are convinced that the tape was somehow

erased by a supernatural agency, but I'm not. My view is that one of two things happened. Either the son accidentally erased it, or the mob who were responsible for the tape erased it so that there would be no evidence to be used against them. Even they must have realised that there were many people in that hall who were not deceived. Anyway, from what I heard the last time I was in the district the three old ladies are trying to figure out some way of getting rid of the undesirable element which has crept in to the sect.

While still on vaguely occult subjects a friend, who wishes to remain unnamed, sent me some cuttings of articles on witchcraft. The articles, of course, had a sensational slant, but from reading one of them it did not seem like genuine witchcraft to me, but people who wanted to indulge in free love and nude dancing and drinking, thinking up a sect in order to have an excuse to indulge in their vices. I think I could almost respect them if they just admitted that they liked their vices and didn't pretend to be witches to cover them up. ^{get} Then there was the more genuine sounding story of a man who did ^{get} caught up in a witch coven, didn't like it, and was told he would be cursed if he left. My informant knows that the coven referred to does exist and that it is "black" and rather nasty. The other cutting is supposed the story of a girl, who called herself "Amanda", which she told to a reporter. The cutting is dated November, 1957, and at that time "Amanda" was 26. According to the story she told the reporter, her father was a radio dealer and her parents brought her up in the ordinary way except for religious training. She was excused Scripture lessons at school and her parents told her that God did not exist, but there was a god and goddess who made things grow, but don't tell her playmates as they wouldn't understand. When "Amanda" was eight, her parents made her scrub herself from head to toe and took her to the home of a friend. There were several people there and they all undressed and stood in a candle lit room in a circle of white tape. Then the high priestess took charge of "Amanda" and trained her to be a witch. Eventually, "Amanda" was made a high priestess because the "elders" decided she had "inborn powers". She said a lot more and there is no doubt that she does belong to a coven (which, incidentally, is at broomsticks drawn with the coven mentioned above). However, the anonymous friend who sent me the cutting happened to know "Amanda" and has told me that the only information contained in the article which was true was that "Amanda's" father was a radio dealer.

And this is the end of Talking Point this time round.

WITCHCRAFT - PART ONE

BLACK

First, let us understand this word "witch". Its connotations of mysterious evil have all been added to its original meaning. Its primary intention was to indicate someone who knew something out of the ordinary. This persist even today as "wizard", literally a Wise-ard. From this comes "wise-woman", and the old term "cunning-man", (conning-man or Kenning-man), the common root to all being simply "to know."

Witchcraft, "the practice of the Wise," has always had two sides, frequently called "Black" for evil practices, and "White" for good ones. However much humans may have approved of the White, they have always suffered from curiosity about the Black. Though regrettable, this is understandable, and it is hoped that once such curiosity is satisfied the inquisitive will turn their attentions to better topics.

To explain the origins of Black Witchcraft, we shall have to go back a very long way. Back to cave-dwelling tribal times. Remember that the general scheme of life was that the men hunted, and women stayed at the family or tribal centre, cooking, looking after children, making clothes from skins, etc.

It would be women who first observed that children who ate certain berries or parts of plants nearly always died. This would cause no particular comment or interest among the men, who worked on the principle that there were plenty more where those came from, and enough mouths to feed anyway. To a thoughtful woman, however, it presented quite another picture - the attractive idea of disposing of a disliked or unwanted person. She could not do this in battle, but poison would do the work for her just as well, if not better.

One can picture the story even from this distance of time. Perhaps her man had over-beaten her, and she desired revenge. Out into the woods goes an infuriated wife, and collects some of those nice berries that little Og ate just before he died so painfully. Into the special brontosaurus^{soup} they go, and Og's father, Bog, drinks it up nicely, and goes off hiccuping and belching into the bushes. Too bad he never comes back, and when they find the remains, his pals give them a decent funeral if some roving creature has not beaten them to the job. No post-mortems, no coroner, no police, just freedom for a sorrowing widow.

For the first time in history, women were possessors of a superior power to men - knowledge of poisons. Secrets were passed down from mother to daughter as sacred information. Armed with such a weapon, the weakest woman was a match for the most powerful and dangerous man. He defended his life with his physical strength, she defended hers with cunning, and the first witch was born.

Later on, when religion came into the picture, another angle was added. One could scarcely pray to a good and kindly God to assist with a murder or other dark deed, so the Opposite Number had to be discovered or invented. Good witches prayed to the Good God, and evil ones to the Bad Devil. It all depended what they wanted.

As time went on, the cult spread, became organised, and evolved into a definite shape. There were "get-togethers", later called Sabbats, at which the devotees met, greeted old friends and swapped recipes, stories, ideas, schemes for mutual aid and so forth. When the business part of the meeting had been dealt with, they could let their hair down and get on with the orgies and fun. Sabbats were simply witches' conventions.

Many lurid accounts have been written and guesses made as to what took place at these orgies, all of which can be summed up under the two headings of sex and sadism. So far as can be gathered, apart from ritual sacrifices, there does not seem to have been much organised cruelty to animals except in certain instances and localities such as the Taghiem Rite, consisting in the horrible torturing of live cats.

One has to remember that a good many Black Witches were women far past the natural attractions of youth, but still possessed with sexual urges and longings. With sufficient drink and drugs going the rounds of a Sabbat, male witches could be persuaded to oblige hags they would not have touched during normal sober moments. In fact, just as it was good etiquette during Victorian times to offer dances to older women, so it became good witch-manners to offer male services to the ugliest crones. It may have even been a religious duty out of honour to the God they followed. Undoubtedly the males would have been paid for this in some way. They were the gigolos of their time. Today, one has the picture of a rich ugly old woman buying the favours of her weak young escort. Result is the same, motive is the same, only the method alters.

Black witchcraft offered opportunities for individuals to perform acts of ill-intent or released sexual urges in organised groups which encouraged such activities, and assisted them as much as possible. There lay, and still lies, its attraction.

All helped each other bring out and express the very worst that lies in the nature of mankind. They were all in a Covenant (or coven) of Evil.

Everything that furthered such ends was pressed into service. They developed great skills in drugs from the most potent poisons to the strongest aphrodisiacs and most useful hallucinogens. Under the influence of such drugs, things could be accomplished which were beyond the power of a normal being, and the drug problem is with us yet.

Nor was the mental aspect of witchcraft forgotten. They concentrated on the faculty of "ill-wishing", "overlooking", and other forms of psychological warfare. They, too, had their ecstasies and mystics, their mediums who sought only spirits of a like evil nature. They developed a faculty of mind which finally culminated in the short and pithy creed of "Evil, be thou my Good!" In fact, it is rather interesting that they apparently knew the difference between the two principles, and quite deliberately chose that which damaged their fellow humans the most. Their guiding rule appears to have been "sacrifice to the Self, not of the Self." They discovered it was quite possible and practical to influence and injure others by mental processes of which they made a specialised study. The results are still with us now. Advertisers use it every day. First the process of attracting attention, then the breakdown of resistance, finally the kill itself, and another sale is made. Black witches used those methods long ago for far more terrible results than a fool parting with money.

With the accumulation of years and conscious experience, grew a more elaborated ritual and cultus. The "cell" system came into being, so that there were a limited number to each coven. Thirteen people in all, only one of whom was supposed to know members of other covens. Black witchcraft "went underground" even more than at first, and a pseudo-religious overlay came into being. Black witches became the sworn enemies of the official Church, and were duly persecuted as such. It became part of witch-rituals to profane or damage the rites of the Church. Reversed crucifixes and like, became the order of the day. The modern Roman Catholic practice of putting Communion Bread directly into the communicant's mouth arose from a fear of it being concealed in the hands, where it used to be placed, and subsequently used for blasphemous practices. Cunning Black witches would even creep into the church on the night preceding a Communion, and secrete wafers of their own beneath the altar cloth. Later the priest would pronounce the words of Consecration during Mass, which automatically consecrated the hidden bread beneath his unknowing hands. The following night, witches would re-enter the church and remove the now Holy Bread for

their own purposes. This led to all night vigils being kept in churches, and is the origin of them.

Exactly what the Black witches did with these consecrated wafers is not entirely clear. It is recorded that they fed them to toads, and ill-treated them in any way they could. Presumably they felt that anything they could inflict on what was believed to be a Divine Body, would also injure the followers of that God. The point of interest here is that evidently the witches did not disbelieve in the validity of the Consecrated Host or the sacredness of religious articles. Unless they had believed, they would not have gone to such lengths to obtain them and misuse them. Equally, they were unafraid of any consecrated article, and had no fears of contact from such things. No sign of the Cross repelled witches, nor was anything too holy for them to take and defile. If vampires and demons might be frightened by blessed objects, witches certainly were not.

A popular connection with witches is the broomstick. The old witch is figured riding triumphantly to her Sabbat on this unconventional steed. There is a certain amount of truth in this notion, nearly as bizarre. The secret lay in the fact that for this type of Sabbat it was necessary to anoint the whole body and the broomstick with special ointment. The active ingredient of this was mainly belladonna which, being absorbed through the skin, gave rise to curious symptoms. To quote from "Materia Medica": "Large doses of belladonna causes delirium. Stimulation is followed by paralysis. Other symptoms are visions, staggering gait and giddiness."

Exactly what the old crone did with the broomstick handle need surely be left to the imagination and classified un the general heading of auto-eroticism. Doubtless it was better than nothing. At the climax of such stimulation, the delightedly drugged witch would fall into an exhausted state of semi-trance, during which her dreams would take her into a condition of mind which would be vaguely remembered on waking as though they were actualities.

The use of drugs served Black witches well under torture by decreasing sensibility to pain and inhibiting tears. Inquisitors said many times it was a sure sign of witchcraft if a suspect could not cry. Belladonna was the agent here. What is surprising is why, considering their knowledge of poison, did witches not take the then equivalent of a lethal pill, and put themselves out of their misery before the torturers really got to work. It is absurd to suppose they had neither the knowledge nor means to do such a thing. One can only assume that they knew of and feared the traditional fate of a suicide, to be condemned after death to re-experience their last moments until

the term which was to have been their natural life ended. Either that or some other motive born of hope or fear kept them alive until the bitter end.

Black witchcraft relied a great deal on "sympathetic magic!" The well-known wax dolls full of pins is an excellent example. To be truly effective, the doll had to have some fragment of the victim's body worked into it, usually hair clippings or nail parings. The theory was that what happened to the part would also happen to the whole. That which was done to a likeness could be reproduced on the original, if effective links could be made between the two. It was usually essential that the victim have at least an inkling that he or she was being bewitched, though they need not know the identity of the responsible operator. There were a great many ways of putting an evil influence into motion, and most witches had their own favourite method, often passed from one to another until the original significance had been forgotten. Ways and means were simply a matter of experience or choice. The motive of willing evil towards other human beings remained the same throughout the ages.

It is scarcely surprising that ordinary mortals hated, loathed, and above all, feared the very word "witch". It became all that could be associated with ill to the human race as a whole. History is full of incidents showing the tragic effects of such hysterical and blind terror. Mad persecutions swept away guilty and innocent alike with the same panic. We have now transferred such activities to political fields. Names and methods change, motivation remains.

Naturally there was a good side to witchcraft as well as a bad one. Many harmless and unfortunate people perished in the flames that were kindled for evil-doers. The "White" side of witchcraft deserves entirely separate treatment, and will so be dealt with. What it is intended to show here is that Black witchcraft did, and does exist. It is an evil thing, and was so intended in the first place. The vital issue is not to confuse the two opposite streams, and assume that everything concerned with witchcraft is evil. One might as well take the same attitude towards science. "Science"? - the art of knowing. "Knowing"? - Kenning - cunning - back to witchcraft again!

It might be as well to remember the traditional words spoken by the Tempter in the Garden of Eden. "Your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil!" That is the whole thing in a nutshell, that both principles stem from the same tree, and it all depends which sort of witch chooses which.

PART TWO - WHITE

White witchcraft differs from Black essentially in motive. The White witch was concerned with using her knowledge and experience for the benefit of her fellow creatures, both human and animal. Because the general organisation of White witchcraft had points in common with that of the Black, the two were often confused by outsiders with disastrous results.

Both Black and White used the "coven" system, having thirteen members to a group. So, for that matter, did orthodox Christians, and thirteen was the number for a convent, or religious community. Both Black and White had four yearly Assemblies, meetings, Sabbats, or Convention, the word now commonly used. The point of divergence was always motive. The Blacks met for ill, and the Whites for good purposes.

The main difference between a Witch and any other good living person is that witches were, and are, persons who refuse to be, or dislike being, herded together under any particular religious banner and made to worship as the leaders of that Faith dictate. They are mainly free-lances in their sphere of thinking, and the bond between them is simply one of mutual protection for developing their own individual lines of approach. They have an aversion to organised religion as such, even though they respect the rights of other people to believe as they please. All they ask is to be left alone with their own ideas.

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Nevertheless, they/formularies peculiar to themselves. They believed in a God or Gods, they practised rites, their intentions were well disposed towards both Divine and Human. Whereas the Black witch sought poisons, the White one discovered healing herbs and beneficial brews. Her simple medicines and kindly advice must have helped innumerable sufferers through the ages. She could be a doctor and psychologist rolled into one, and the best of neighbours and friends in any emergency. She believed in the existence of kindly spirits, ready to help humans if they could, and a God with a big enough sense of humour to tolerate His (or sometimes Her) human creations. Why, then, if the woman was so good, did she remain a witch?

She did so, because she was instinctively a member of the Oldest Old Religion on this earth. One that relied on innder knowledge and experience within an individual rather than set formularies expounded by followers of Great Teachers. She was outside the pale of every organised religion on earth just because she refused to enter one because anyone ordered her to do so. Before churches existed, humans had to find God for themselves,

and the witch believed this was still the best way. Hers was a kind God who loved all creatures in spite of themselves, and when they started condemning each other to Eternal Damnation, she wanted no part in it.

In a sense White Witchcraft was, and is, a sort of Nature Religion. Nature can be both lovely and terrible, but the White witch wanted the lovely part to overcome the terrible, health to take the place of disease, love to triumph over hate. "Live and let live" might have been her creed.

Orthodox religious people, especially Christians, may have thought her moral sense peculiar. For her, sex was not a sin, but a sacrament, to be treated as such with respect and reverence. If genuine affection existed between two parties, she saw no wrong in it. She might steal from a wealthy boor who would suffer no loss, to help some poor sufferer, and see herself as an agent of mercy. Equally she might slay some tyrant who was causing agony and oppression to those around him, and regard herself as a martyr for their benefit. Whatever she did, her motive would always be that of doing as well as she could for others. Not that she was entirely selfless, and if she could make anything she did, but never in a way that injured a person she considered undeserving of harm.

With regard to the rites and cultus of White witchcraft, less information is available than for the Black. Probably because White witchcraft was so personalised an affair, that every member was a one man (or one woman) religion of their own. They certainly had their meetings, their dances, their feasts, and their sort of worship. From what we can gather, their circular dances were performed "deosil", or clockwise, as against the Black direction of widdershins, or anti-clockwise. That is to say they danced in the same direction as the sun. To look for survivals of this, one has to examine traditional games of childhood (if any are left) like "Ring-o-Roses", maypole dances and suchlike. Most of these have some connection with fertility rites, or symbolic sacrifices.

It was probably White witchcraft which was responsible for substitution sacrifices. In other words, instead of a human being meeting a ritual end to propitiate gods, an animal was sacrificed instead which bore his name and titles. Later on, inanimate objects were offered instead of living creatures, which practice continues to this day. Amid all the animal sacrifices of ancient Egypt, for instance, the king Amenhotep IV stood out as Akh-en-Aton, so called the "Heretic King". He was brave (or foolhardy) enough to forbid living sacrifices to the gods, and offered instead corn and wine, oil, water, and incense. These were offered not to personalised gods under animal or human shape, but to a Divine Spirit, symbolised as a Sun, reaching out hands of friendship to every living thing on this

earth. Unluckily, this great man was born ahead of his time, and the old priests could scarcely wait for his death before the sacrificial knives came out again.

A good deal of White witchcraft activity was directed towards removing evils caused by their Black counterparts. Wise women, a polite term for White witches, were often consulted when an evil bewitchment was suspected, and their help sought to counteract ill influences. It is a curious fact that most villagers instinctively went to the White witch for such aid, rather than to the local priest or parson. Maybe they felt that "Parson's God" cared more for the "gentlefolk" than He did for a mere peasant.

White witchcraft was generally an unassuming cult, which is presumably why it never achieved the publicity of notoriety of its Black counterpart. While not approving of the organised Christian Church as such, White witches did not attempt to profane any of its ceremonies. Sometimes they even managed to introduce their own customs very quietly into church practice, such as, for instance, the "corn dollies" seen even today at Harvest Festivals. One has to remember that White witchcraft sprang from agricultural rather than urban communities, and it is in country churches and places that one should seek such survivals.

It was to the White witch that bereaved persons went secretly in hopes of learning the fate of their dead loved ones. Priests and parson alike thundered away about forbidden traffic with departed souls, while willing enough to accept any money offered for their own prayers. This might be impressive, but was not much homely comfort to a sorrowing wife or husband. They wanted to feel some personal contact with those they had loved so dearly. The White witch had developed clairvoyant and psychic ability not possessed by any priest, and did what she could to console and help survivors. Sometimes she put her gifts into use by "telling their fortunes", often warning them of approaching dangers, or giving them sound advice unobtainable elsewhere. Priests saw the lesser laity as incorrigible sinners, the witch only saw stupid or dimwitted fellow humans in sad need of some commonsense help which she gave so far as she could.

In fact, the chief gift of a true White witch was, and is, the ability to see further into a brick wall than most people. Nowadays we talk glibly about extra-sensory perception and whatnot, but White witches knew about such matters in the very long ago. They were not content to take for granted any dictatorial dogmas insisted upon by ecclesiastical panjandrums of any creed whatever. They wanted to find out for themselves, and make their own discoveries concerning that part of Nature hidden from man. The tool for this purpose on which they

relied most was intuition, which is quite another thing to blind belief in obedience born of fear

Apart from other humans, the White witch was a friend of the animal kingdom. With her knowledge of herbs and remedies she frequently cured animal ailments which were beyond the means of ordinary farm experience. Like the Black Witch, she passed some of these formulae on to daughters, and they served for many centuries to help in the prosperity of farmers and stockbreeders

I have been saying "she" all along as though there were no male White witches, which, of course, there were, but probably not nearly so many as female ones. This was largely because witch-gifts, mainly concerned with human fertility, psychic insight, and the gentler side of human nature are more essentially feminine. The White witches' instincts were principally maternal ones, hence their worship of a Mother Image of God, ignored or played down by militant priesthoods. It was probably due to influence from White witches that the Mother Image crept into Christian worship. Rather than a Terrible God who insisted on the destruction of all who did not believe as his priests taught, who delighted in righteous warfare against the heathen, witches preferred another conception of divinity. They visualised the Creator as a Mother, who could not help loving her children, no matter how naughty they were. She might punish them, spank them, scold them, but no matter what happened She would always love them. No wonder White witchcraft was unpopular with all masculinised religions. To a witch, the Virgin Birth meant the production of the visible Universe from the self-fertilised womb of the Supreme Mother of All. No matter how much a man may love or revere his mother, only a woman can know for certain exactly what a mother feels, and can share such an experience. Possessing a female God-conception, White witchcraft was truly a woman's concern more than a man's. However, there were men adherents to the cult, and probably still are. It should be noted in passing that the God-forms (or Devil-forms) the Black witches believed in, were mainly masculine.

It is very uncertain how strong White witchcraft was, and is, as an organised and effective body. They seem to have had a dislike of regimentation, even among themselves. In fact, they seem to have been such individualists it is difficult to believe they would accept authoritarian rule by any self styled Chiefs. Possibly their very elusiveness on this account saved them from much persecution during troubled times. This would not have saved them from perishing as heretics, however, and doubtless many died rather than accept a creed forced upon them under threat of death. The chances are to the contrary,

that a number were purely nominal members of Churches, while adhering to the Old Religion in private. In fact, there are reasons for suspecting so, when one examines the accretions from pagan days which have unobtrusively entered Christian beliefs and practices since the religion began.

One thing is certain, White Witchcraft was a gentle and a kindly art. That is not to say its members were either weak or inefficient. Few things can be more terrible than a mother roused to desperation in defence of her children or, for that matter, any child who calls upon her protection. While White witches were not initially aggressive, they would certainly strike at any Black witch who sought to injure them or their protégés. Normally, the White witch left well alone, but if roused for righteous causes, she could be as good a fighter as anyone else. She did not look for trouble, but was prepared to deal with it, using her own weapons if called to do so.

There are many White witches in this world. Some might acknowledge the title, and some might not. Some work as individuals, and others in groups. It makes no difference, they are what they are, laws unto themselves in the hope of being useful to others. It is because they genuinely believe in what they are that they seek no publicity, look for no "converts", shun both conventionalism and commercialism like the plague, and are content to watch the world slowly grow in its own time toward the fundare tal truths they have always reached for.

Witchcraft, both Black and White, has its place in civilisation quite apart from the pages of fairy stories. The fact remains that it was, and is, practised in both its aspects and all its forms. If anything, its adherents are increasing in numbers, but it is doubtful if either side would declare itself openly. The Black because so many of their activities are illegal, and the White because they do not want to attract curiosity seekers, cranks, and similar pests. Who can blame them? Of the two species, Black and White witches, there can be little doubt in the mind of the average person which it would be preferable to meet on a dark night.

In the hinder end of harvest, on All Hallow E'en,
 When the Good Neighbours doe rise, if I rede right,
 Some buckled on a bune-wand, and some on a bean,
 Aye trotting in troops from the twilight;
 Some saddled on a she-ape, all craithed into green,
 Some hobland on a hempstalk, hovand to the height,
 The king of Pharie and his court, with the Elf-queen,
 With many elfish incubus was ridand that night.

Montgomerie (1515)

THE INGREDIENTS OF A MODERN BEST-SELLER

The following is an extract from a novel called "Three-Fingered Death" by G.M. Wilson. (Published by Robert Hale, 63 Old Brompton Road S.W.7). I asked for permission to quote this because Mrs. Wilson has set down very succinctly what I have been trying to say in a very fumbling way in the past few issues of this magazine.

.....bought a book "Called the Stone Over." She turned the stone over and discovered some very unsavoury crawling things indeed.... A clever book in some ways, written in very good English, with flashes of savage humour that most elderly spinsters would have found shocking but which she was able to appreciate from the professional angle. But though she was no prude, she didn't care for the book at all. The subject-matter was meant to shock and it did shock, not so much because it was nasty as because in her opinion, it was cheap and silly. It's easy to ridicule and belittle the Establishment but if you've nothing constructive to put in its place you'd be quite as usefully employed in knocking down coconuts at a fair. And when you try to pull down the Church from its pedestal, you need to be careful that the Devil you set up in its place isn't dressed in the same tight-laced trappings of bigotry and intolerance which the Church has already discarded. The hero, needless to say, was a man of the people, though why Archbishops and Cabinet Ministers and University dons and peers aren't also people she'd always found it difficult to fathom. And she could really believe in working-class heroes who spent most of their time bumping into sluts and tarts and homosexuals in conditions of drunken squalor. There must be some regions of Birmingham and points north where you can stay the night alone and in a clean bed.

But though much of this distressed her, it wasn't what the book had that she minded so much as what it hadn't. It had anger, outspokenness, vituperation, dirt, and several other ingredients of mid-century best-seller, but it lacked the most important ingredient of all - sincerity. Michael himself didn't believe in it. What had he said? "A book's a book. Because the hero's a coal-heaver, it doesn't follow the author's a coal heaver." In which, of course, he was quite right, but the author did have to have some justification for making him a coal heaver. Michael had no justification except money. He'd set out to shock and titillate and to tilt at his own kind because those are the things to say. Anger and dirt are fashionable and he'd jumped on the band-wagon - sold his birthright for a mess of royalties. And that was really unforgivable."

THIS AND THAT - Continued from page 2.

going to say next.

Members may recall my grumbling about the way Stratford have been mucking about with Shakespeare during the last season. Bill was talking to the local theatre manager the other day, who informed him that it was Stratford's worst season and that even the players are fed up with a certain producer there. At least, he was there, but he moved to the Aldwych, Stratford's outpost in some village on the Thames called London. Since he has been there the Aldwych has only been doing 60% of the business they did before. He is also involved with the Arts Theatre and all of a sudden it looks as though that will have to close. However, to get back to Shakespeare. In the autumn we went to see the Italian director Zafferelli's production of "Othello". (I don't think I've spelt the director's name correctly). Now this had scenery, lots of it, and it was produced at a fast pace. For some reason or other, Bannen hasn't done well on either of the occasions I've seen him. First he was a most uninteresting Hamlet and I think he made a mess of the part of Iago. Once more he mumbled his lines and gabbled. Only once did he rise to the occasion and that was during the scene with John Gielgud (Othello). Gielgud's Othello was competent, but not great. In fact, I shall always remember the way he dried up completely in the scene when he was facing the Venetian counsel, and the long pauses while he waited for the prompter. In fact, when he forgot the line "Othello's occupation's gone" half the audience prompted him. The best performances came from Peggy Ashcroft and Dorothy Tutin as Emilia and Desdemona respectively. It was a shame that after building up such a tremendous tension between them just before the murder scene that Gielgud did not measure up the standard they had set for the climax. Oh, well, at least the play had scenery.

The local theatre, which lost a packet of money last year, has not yet lost a penny this season. Last year they put on a lot of avant garde plays - you know, all function and no emotion, and the public stayed away in droves. This season the new manager has been putting on plays that appeal to the eye, the ear and the heart. By this I don't mean soft and silly stuff, but he has varied the bill with whodunits, drama, comedy and straight stuff. He hasn't bothered with the so-called playwrights who set out to shock and only disgust. One of the plays put on was Robert Bolt's "A Man For All Seasons," a play about Sir Thomas More. Now this is the playwright who claimed that Coward had the "last of the wine" yet his own play is vintage stuff. The dialogue was most beautifully written, with echoes of Shakespeare in it, and the play appealed to the mind as well as the heart. It

is a play, I think, that will survive for far longer than the bilge that the medicrities pass off as redblooded drama. I may be wrong, but I think that one day "A Man For All Seasons" will be part of the repertoire of the Old Vic and Stratford on-Avon.

This play had depth because it had emotion and recognised the fact that men thought of other things beside constipation - or vicky vacky. The functional plays and novels have depths - to which literature has never sunk before. Incidentally, the playwright who is much preoccupied with uncontrollable spasms of the large colon (yes, I know there is a word for it, but I can't remember how to spell it) is a member of the CND. I saw a photograph of him the other day ostentatiously displaying the little badge. Now that symbol, worn by the small nucleus of really sincere believers in nuclear disarmament, is a badge of honour. Among these people I include Canon Collins, Dr. Paul Hammett and a few more dedicated souls. Then there are the exhibitionists who flaunt it in the hope, I suppose, that people will look up to them as idealists. But idealists are dangerous because they are fanatics and that lot are too bone lazy and dirty to be any such thing. They would do better to make some acquaintance with soap and water and send their clothes to the dry cleaners. Then there is the rest of them and all that little badge stands for is a panic button. Of course, I'm just as scared as anyone of what could happen, but I don't see that flaunting my fear in public is going to discourage the enemy. On the contrary, he'll move right in if he thinks he's got a pushover. But the wearing of the panic button may explain the modern authors' preoccupation with loose bowels. But I do wish they'd realise that if the theatre going and reading public were all that fascinated by somebody's intestinal troubles they wouldn't bother to get novels or go to plays about it. They'd either read it about in Nurse Whatname's answers to correspondents in the magazines or go and sit in a doctor's waiting room every night and listen to everyone talking about their ailments, or sit there and talk about their own.

While I think of it, in the last issue I made some comments about feuding being dragged into the pages of OMPA. I pounced on Alan Lewis for this, but to give credit where it is due Alan accepted my crit in the spirit I intended it to be given - that is, impersonally - and I have had a couple of quite charming and interesting letters from him. But I see feuding has again reared its ugly head in the December mailing. I am referring to the last page of Andy Main's Suwayya and can only conclude that there is an anti-Eney campaign going in the States by a certain few. Let me say

right now that not knowing anything about it I don't intend to get involved in it. I gather that Dick Eney and Ted White are not exactly friends, but that there is their business and nobody else's. I see that on page 7 Ted White rebutted some remarks made by Hal Shapiro - fair enough, Ted was doing the rebuttal himself. However, Andy, if Ted made his own statement there why did he not make the comment about the Season, too? I read Eney's remark and could not see anything "bitchy" in it. I should imagine that Ted is quite capable of defending himself and perhaps would have preferred to do so. It has been said that New York is the place for fan feuding - whether it is or not I don't know, but if it is, Andy, it certainly didn't take you long to jump on the band wagon. And then you finish up your magazine with the word Pax. You would do better to leave the feuding to the fans who started it (and should be old enough to know better - and don't think I'm excusing myself, either). It was all a great pity, because the rest of the magazine was quite well thought out.

Elsewhere in this issue (review of George Spencer's magazine) I made a comment on the incredibly bad taste which emanates from Hollywood, but I must be fair and say that one of the best films I have seen lately was from the US. It was a film called "Homicidal" and it ^{had} me chewing my fingernails off to the elbows far more than "Psycho" did. "Homicidal" did not have Cinemascope, it did not have colour, but it had some of the most brilliant acting I have seen on the American screen for too long a time. The build up of tension was brilliantly done and the audience (some of them) actually screamed at that tremendous climax. It was a pity about the "fright-break" gimmick as that was quite unnecessary, but Jean Arless's performance was a fine piece of acting. Incidentally, when the annual awards were dished out, did this performer get one? If not, why not? Or is one of the qualifications a string of divorces and the snatching of the best friend's husband or wife? By the way, up there I was not criticising "Psycho" as a bad film - it was anything but. I was just saying that although good, it did not make my hair stand on end the way "Homicidal" did. Note to fans who have not seen the latter - see it from the beginning or the whole effect of the climax will be ruined.

I have been glancing through Ethel's magazine and reading of her experiences as a probationer and her comments that the beds were never tidy enough to suit the sister. What the sisters never seemed to realise was how irritating it was for the poor patients. I can understand the view that a patient should not be shown too much sympathy, but as a patient the thing which enraged me was the fact that no sooner had you got yourself comfortable than the sister was carping at some harried little probationer and the bed was immediately remade so tightly that you

wonder why the hell they didn't shove in a few spikes and make it a proper Iron Maiden. I was once a patient in York County Hospital, which was also a training school for nurses and I do not think I shall ever forget poor little Nicholson, the youngest probationer. I believe she had already worked for a while in a children's hospital and was therefore admitted as a probationer a year younger than usual. Nicholson was a nice little thing, but a rather spotty faced child (tut, I must be getting old - if I recall I wasn't much older than she was) and was of the unfortunate type who invariably get picked on and didn't Sister Jones pick on her. Even the patients realised that a nurse has to be trained, but what upset them was the continued humiliation of Nurse Nicholson. If the sister wasn't satisfied with what she had done - and she never was, no matter how hard the girl tried - our attitude was that she could have taken the girl off to the linen room or sluice to tell her off instead of deliberately humiliating her in front of us all. It may or may not have upset the girl, but it certainly upset the patients. But little Nicholson stuck it out because a year later I was ambling round York when who should come up to me but the probationer we had once felt so sorry for. She must have had an excellent memory as she not only remembered my name, but the time I was in the hospital, too. A year had given her a little more confidence and she was now, of course, in a different ward and seemed to be far happier. But I can't help thinking that little Nicholson was one of a few who managed to stick it out in spite of that sister's bitchiness. How many good potential nurses had been unable to stand Sister Jones' public humiliations and had given up their career? And the nurses who did stick it out certainly didn't do it for the pay, as it was terrible.

Memory of that probationer's humiliation had an effect a few years after. This time the place was Stirling Royal Infirmary. I was only having a minor op, but just before I went under I had a faint recollection of a sister narking at a nurse. When I came to I'll be damned if she weren't nagging at another one, and as her voice faded into the distance I got an irrational impulse that I couldn't stay and listen to that for a few days. It was one of those moments when a ward is quiet and the nurse are busy elsewhere. I grabbed all my clothes from the locker, said to a patient "tell them I've gone as I don't think I'll like it here," and went off to the annexe where I dressed and ambled out of the hospital. My head felt quite clear and as I was walking down the steps of the hospital I started to congratulate myself on feeling so well considering that it hadn't been all that long since I had left the theatre. Then something seemed to go wrong and the next thing I remember was being in a taxi between a man and his wife. He had come to collect from the hospital and was just in time to catch me as I started to pitch down the steps. He and

his wife put me in the taxi and took me home with them. Mrs. Brown plonked me down on a bed for the afternoon, then gave me a light meal - I knew better than to eat anything heavy by then - and persuaded their next door neighbour to drive me to the station to catch the evening train to Oban. The Scots, I discovered, were among the kindest, generous and most hospitable people that I had ever met. It was a ninety mile trip to Oban and before the journey was over I had time to realise that I had done a pretty dumb thing in leaving the hospital. We were billeted in hotels and I remember as I was going up the stairs in the Marine Hotel, Pat Purdy, the admin corporal passed me, then stopped. "OH, hello, Bobbie," she said. "I thought you were in Stirling having an operation." "Oh, I had that this morning," replied. "This morning?" shrieked Pat. She may have said something else, but at this moment the floor came up and hit me in the face and a much displeased M.O. then pushed me into sick quarters for a few days, where the orderlies kept a close eye on me in case I took it into my head to amble off again.

I see in John Baxter's BUNYIP that he has obtained some explanations on various churches attitudes to science and that some are waiting for the church to become the potent force it was in the Middle Ages. I think they are in for a long wait. In the Middle Ages many people were illiterate and had to rely on what they were told by the priests, who had no intention of telling the population anything that would start it thinking for itself. It was one of the reasons why they did not want the Bible translated into English. When it was, a great many people learned to read so they could look at the Bible for themselves. Some, unfortunately concentrated on the wrathful God of the old Testament, but others read reports of what Christ did and said and felt more than a little put out at the entirely different things the priests had told them. They also remembered the Inquisition and other unpleasant refinements reserved for people who did not agree with the priests. The Reformers were just as bad, because of instead of being tolerant they were just as extreme as the Papists were and also sent people to the torture chamber and the stake. There must be many hundreds of people walking about today who cannot forgive what the churches did in the name of the Prince of Peace. Not all of them were like it, but the few who weren't were judged with the rest. Today, the pocket book has put on people's shelves literature that was never there before. With a price range within reach of everyone's pocket's the number of books which deal with specific periods and subjects have had an enormously increased sale and quite ordinary people know far more about what happened in the past and the churches have not come out of it too well. Oh, many of them did plenty of good, but human nature being what it is "The evil that men do live after them, the good is oft interred with their bones." And no one will want back the medieval church. Would you?

By the way, John, this is one Ompa who is not, most definitely not, a jazz fan. Some of the old type jazz I do like as at least there is some melody in it, but this modern cacophony of discords that passes for jazz and which is made by the more vocal nerve wracked, sets my nerves jumping. It really does - my temper just goes snap after five minutes of it. Yet I suppose it has its place in the modern scheme of things as it reflects very accurately the jumpy, neurotic way of life that is the norm for the sixties.

Quite a few members have mentioned my story of Camp Crazy and the reaction was much as I expected it would be - downright disbelief, doubts, and a rather doubtful acceptance in one or two cases. God knows, I did try and find a rational explanation, even to wondering if there were dumps of DM gas on the camp. If there were and it was escaping it would have accounted for the depression and the suicides. But there were no such dumps so I was back where I started. The only thing I can do now is to leave members to believe or disbelieve as they wish.

I see I have been taken to task for calling the president of the CND a woolly minded idealist. I haven't altered my opinion of Bertrand Russell one little bit and one of the reasons is on page 9. In fact, now that he has calmly admitted in court (as a witness) that he was persuading his followers to immobilise an airfield not far from here, my opinion of him has sunk even lower. It didn't matter, of course, that that airfield is one of those which defend this particular area. Too bad if someone had pressed a button and nothing could have moved from that airfield to prevent it. I, for one, object to being atomised because one fool can't grow old gracefully, but is outliving his greatness by making himself look a damn fool in public. Except this isn't funny - it's tragic. It would be a sad end for a man who has done great things in his life to end up being thought a fifth columnist and ending his days in disgrace.

These people remind me somewhat of the early Christians, and I do not mean the very early Celtic church, but those in Europe. Most of them were the non-violent, passive-resistant type and many were martyred, mainly because they were ec-statics and wanted to be or were exhibitionists, anyway, and would even die to be remembered. Taken on an average the Romans didn't martyr all that many and those they executed were executed because they were subversive and interfering politically. In fact, they were wrecking the Empire. When Christianity became the official religion did they become tolerant and gentle and forgiving? No damned fear they didn't! They murdered and maimed more people than any other sect in

history. You can check it in the Decline and Fall. That is what happened when the non-violent passive resisters got into power after they had disaffected the army and every other walk of life. The parallel frightens me, as human nature has not changed that much in a few hundred years. I suppose the six on trial now consider themselves martyrs to their cause and are thoroughly enjoying every minute of the limelight. And they must be addressed as Mister, of course, not just by their surname. If they are concerned about that I can just imagine what it would be like if they had the running of the country. I suppose I could be an idealist of that sort, but I can't face the thought of 75% of the world population being destroyed just so that the 25% will live the way I want it to - and 75% of the population will be destroyed if too many of these misguided chumps rush around immobilizing our defences.

And, apropos of nothing in particular, I suppose some well-meaning old soul will get up a petition asking for Hanratty not to be hanged. I don't suppose it will occur to anyone to get up a subscription for the widow and two children of the man he shot or for the girl he shot, who is not only paralysed for life, but has got the memory of being raped and having a gun emptied into her for the rest of her life.

But to proceed in a lighter vein, there is the story of the Roman Master of the Games. This was in the days when the Romans still ruled a good part of the known world, of course. One day, a hard up ex-soldier sold the Gamesmaster a monkey which he thought might come in handy for the next circus and the Gamesmaster was wondering what part of the show he could put this monkey in when it spoke to him and pointed out that he could make the Gamesmaster popular in all the Society sets by merely taking him, the monkey, round with him. After the first shock of hearing the animal speak the Gamesmaster realised he was on to a Good Thing and dined out for some months on the strength of his talking monkey, who was extremely erudite and quite easily picked up reading and writing from the Gamesmaster. It was during the days when the Praetorians were bopping emperors if they didn't happen to like the cut of the toga. The Gamesmaster and his monkey survived four short reigns, but the fifth emperor decided that if there were any talking monkeys he should have them. "Give me that thing, that gibbon, or whatever you call that monkey," he said to the Gamesmaster. The latter said he was frightfully sorry and all that, but he couldn't oblige. This marked the emperor very much and he asked again for the monkey. The Gamesmaster refused again. "Fool!" screeched the emperor, "don't you realise if I can't have the monkey I shall have your life?" "If you live long enough," said the gamesmaster rashly. That did it, of course. "Kill the fool, "

bawled the emperor to the guards, who promptly did so, Unfortunately, from sheer force of habit they killed the emperor also and this left the monkey without a master. But the little gibbon immediately got himself a job as an assistant librarian and in his spare time he wrote a cautionary tale for all gamesmasters which became a best seller. In fact, new gamesmasters were always given a copy of the monkey's book, which was called "The Declining Fool of a Roman Umpire."

Well, why should Mercer be the only one to inflict them on you? Sorry, Archie, I left out the mister - I hope you don't mind. Which you won't, having a broader outlook than would be martyrs.

Glancing back over these stencils I seemed to have been anti- dirty words, anti- martyr, anti-church, anti-teenage cult, anti filthy literature, anti-Hollywood - in fact, anti everything. It must be force of habit and I shall end up being referred to as everybody's anti. Teehee! Done it on you again, Archie. in ages

For the first time/I went to a - er - dance a few days back. It was the annual Cheltenham Arts Ball. Well, that's what it was advertised as, but I always thought a ball was proper dancing. As a social evening it was a fair success, but as a dance, no. If it had been called, instead of an Arts Ball, not a fancy dress dance, but a fancy dress "do" it would have been much nearer the mark. There were seven bands there and I did think that at least one band and one hall could have been used for the people who wanted to dance properly and there were some there of all ages who did want to do so. I should have thought that a proper M.C. would have stopped the jiving when people who liked ballroom dancing were trying to waltz. Yes, even in the foxtrots and waltzes the floor was littered with couples jiving - or whatever it's called these days. It was jiving when I was a teenager. And at last I saw this so-called dance "The Twist". Humph! I may be wrong, but I have a feeling my mother must have put more rhythm and joy into it in the days when they did the Charleston. I am not saying the people shouldn't have jived if they wanted to, but surely with seven bands and several halls at least one could have been reserved for the people who preferred straight dancing. Oh, well, I was reading a book review the other day and the reviewer was explaining the plot about two dear little teenagers who had to face heartless parents, insensitive social workers, and brutal police, so who am I to want just one hall out of several to do some straight dancing in and thus take away a whole chunk of space from the little dears. I, of course, jived to different tunes in my teens. The tunes of bombs and bullets. Quite

a jive it was, too, dodging them.

And it is here that I will have to call a halt. I am sorry that I didn't manage to get in a proper Countdown of the December mailing, as I do like to mention everyone if I can. But time is once again running short and now I have got this far I would like to make the March mailing. Anyway, I hope that I have said enough to start a few discussions going. And that is about all I have to say. No, it isn't - don't forget

ETHEL LINDSAY FOR T.A.F.F.

Get out of that hyperspace, Ethel!

Postscript. Feb.20, 1962. 20.00 hours G.M.T. First of all congratulations to Colonel Glenn on his terrific achievement and bouquets to all the broadcasters concerned who kept us in touch on this wonderful occasion. Also one brickbat to the B.B.C. for at the most dramatic moment of all - when John Glenn was taken on board after his flight - taking us back to the studio. Tchah! I suppose when someone presses the panic button the B.B.C will announce "The early warning system has just sounded and you have four minutes to make preparations. Meanwhile here are today's fat stock prices, which will be followed by a record 'Ain't It Grand To Be Blooming Well Dead.' The Fat sto-----". Tchach! again. There are times when British phlegm is carried a bit too goddam far. Blast it! I wanted to hear John Glenn say "Howdy folks!" or "Earth! Eeeech!"

VAGARY 15. Edited and published by Roberta Gray, at the sign of William the Corncurer, 14 Bennington Street, Cheltenham, Glos. Spring, 1962.