

# ZENITH

APRIL 1942  
number five





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april • 1942      zenith      number • five  
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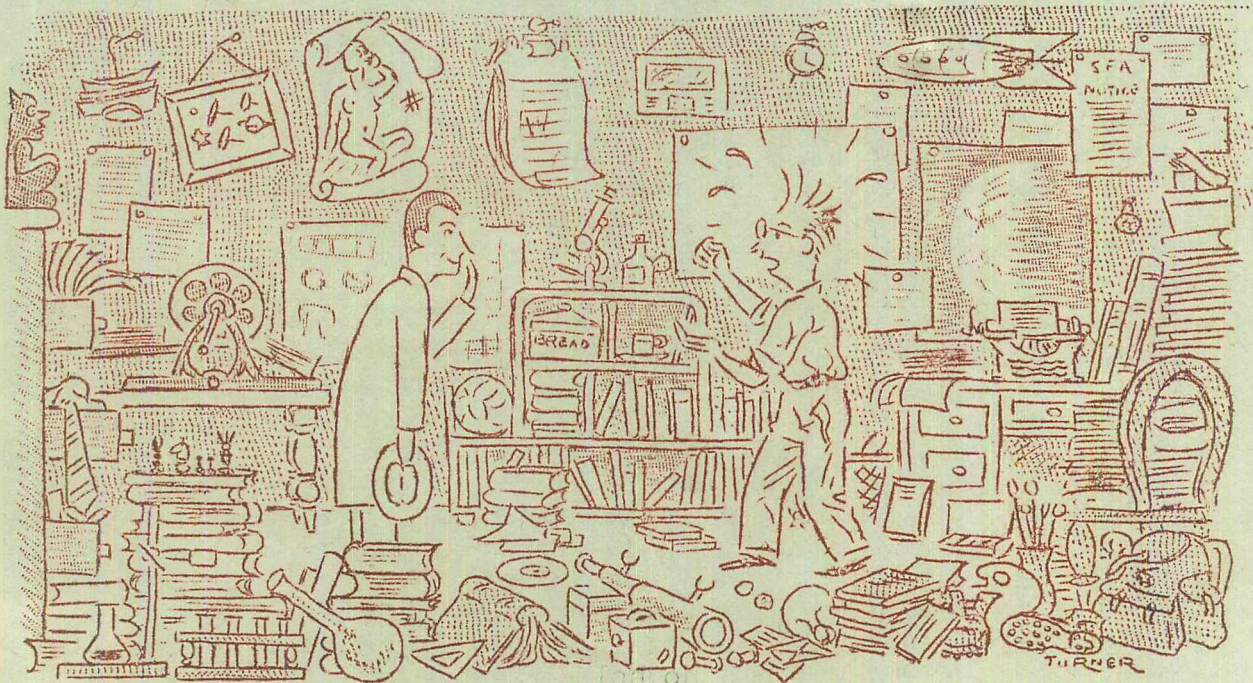
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Z E N I T H    -    the fanmag without a future ! Brought to you by courtesy of your coeds (Ghu bless 'em!) Harry Turner & Marion Eadie, still residing at 41 Longford Place, Victoria Park, Manchester 14, England. Price still stabilised at 6d per copy, or in the case of American readers (both of 'em) the equivalent in mags. And remember - if there's a rude word in the space alongside, it's just to jog your memory about sending a further sub for the mag!

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"As I always say, we fans must set an example to the rest of the world - show them how to live planned, orderly lives . . ."

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# CONSUMMATION

83

BY

MARION F. EADIE

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"This is Utopia", said the old man, in answer to my question.

"How odd!" I said. "I must have slipped through some dimension or other".

"Come, let me show you our city", he said.

I was scarcely surprised to see tall white buildings, gardens, fountains, and all the usual appurtenances of the New York World's Fair. The streets were silent and empty and spotlessly clean.

"How peaceful it is!" I murmured.

"We have locked up all the noisy people", said my old man.

"I beg your pardon?" I said, startled.

"After the last war we held a great court of justice", he explained, "and we decided to reorganise society by locking up all the people who were undesirable in a well-balanced community. We started with the people who shout and sing and talk loudly and bellow over the telephone."

I thought there was something in this. "How shining and clean everything is!" I said next.

"We have locked up all the people who throw away tram tickets, paper bags, cigarette packets, and broken umbrellas", replied the old man.

"Not to mention people who drop bombs and things?" I said.

"We have no wars now", answered the old man. "We locked up all the people responsible for the last war."

"You must have done a bit of locking up", I suggested.

"We did", he said. "We locked up all the profiteers as well, and all the black-marketeers, and all the defeatists."

"So then you had nothing left but sane, healthy, noble human beings?" I asked.

"That's right", said the old man. "That's quite right. For two hundred years we had uninterrupted peace and prosperity. No unemployment, no fear of poverty, no illness, no crime."

"Not even a crime passionel?" I demanded hopefully.

"We locked up all the queer people", he said, "but alas ..."

"Alas?" I encouraged him.

"Some of the people grew insolent and irresponsible under continual peace and security", he murmured sadly. "So we had to lock them up."

"Then you have by this time weeded out all but the best?"

"More of the people became arrogant", he continued as if he had not heard. "There was no hold over them. There was no discipline. We had to lock up more and more of them."

"And now ... ?" I asked breathlessly.

"Today", he said, "we locked up the last thousand." He laughed



84 loudly, hysterically, insanely. "They are all locked up now. I am the only man left."

I laid a restraining hand on his arm, but he shook it violently off.

"Let me go!" he screamed. "I must go! Let me go, let me go!"

He rushed off, waving his arms madly.

"Where are you going?" I shouted after him.

"I am going! I am going!" his voice came back more and more faintly. "I am the last man, and I am going to lock myself up!"

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## THE GREAT EXPERIMENT!

BY

T E D C A R N E L L

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I have been waiting for many weeks to receive some kind of news from USA -- either by letter or fanmag -- to know just what the American fans feel about fandom's situation now that their country is at war. I want to know what their reactions are, and what they intend to do; whether they will 'carry on' to the best advantage under the circumstances; whether they will have to put their duplicators and typewriters away for an undetermined period -- and above all else, how they will continue, if that is possible.

It is still early for an analysis of the whole nation's opinion, but early reports begin to make some sense. They have the will to carry on, and, knowing the tenacity of our friends, I have no doubt that they will, come hell and high water. In the manner of their continuance, however, they might take a different line to that taken by British fandom, and the experiment might well prove to be the most interesting we have yet had.

Julius Unger's Fantasy Fiction Telegram, December 27th. 1941 issue, brings a highly controversial article from colleague Wollheim, "War Comes to American Fandom". DAW gives a possible summary of what may happen to the pro-publications, of paper restrictions and increasing costs, and of the obvious call-up of authors and artists. This we can well envisage. Then he goes on to suggest how the Americans can best continue fandom . . .

"As for fandom: when Britain entered the war in 1939, British fans placed the powerful Science Fiction Association in suspension. The action was clearly a mistake -- British fandom became more active rather than less so after the change. American fans must not make the same error; we must not place the National

Fantasy Fan Federation or Fantasy Amateur Press Association on 85 the ice. There are no necessities for such moves at all. These groups will be strengthened by war. Nor must we dissolve fan clubs as was done in London. The London group found themselves still holding meetings two years later -- informally -- but still the same, and as strong as ever . . . "

DAW's ideas may prove correct so far as American fans are concerned, but his analogies concerning the methods we adopted here when war commenced are entirely wrong. The two countries have not undergone the same conditions; nor will they. Therefore, the Americans should think deeply before they take it for granted that we made any mistakes. Far better that they should mould their future activities according to circumstances as they arise.

Taking DAW's statement apart, piece by piece -- the SFA was not parked immediately the war broke out just because the war was on us, but because of a minor host of difficulties that had already arisen in that short time. We know now that it could well have continued in a modified form for a year, and could perhaps have been continuing now if that initial decision had not been taken. We in Britain expected a rain of death from the skies from the sounding of the first siren; to us in London it seemed then that we could expect raids of a high magnitude with very little time to take shelter. We had been warned that ten minutes was the most we could expect after raiders had crossed the coastline.

Ten minutes! Fans in Chicago and Denver and other inland American cities aren't going to worry much about air raids! But that isn't the point -- conscription was upon us before the war started, and some of our younger fans had already been called up. The Government moved fast in calling up more men, and none of us knew just how long we had before going into one of the Services. Nobody knew, in fact, just what the morrow would bring -- only that there was a very narrow gulf between us and Germany, and that the examples they had shown in bombing Poland didn't augur very well for ourselves.

Why Germany didn't bomb us heavily and widely in those first months is now clear -- methodically they were preparing for the coup de grace of France and ourselves in one swoop. There was no need to bomb us into submission. But we weren't to know that. So the SFA Committee, backed by the London members, agreed at the meeting in mid-September that it was best to suspend the Association. Admittedly the Londoners held the ruling block at the time, but they were heavily outnumbered by members elsewhere in the country. None of those members disagreed with the decision taken, for they too were expecting plenty of trouble from above.

British fandom did not become more active after the SFA was suspended. It flickered along a dismal path, lit occasionally by the news of a meeting somewhere, or a fanmag publication -- usually long overdue and duplicated under bad conditions. It was not



86 until conditions became somewhat stabilised, and we had become accustomed to wartime standards that fans began to drop back into their old ways. But - there was a growing percentage of fans being called up; fanmag editors could no longer rely upon their regular subscribers to be "At Home" either for material or subscriptions.

Came Dunkirk -- never has this country been so shaken as the appalling possibilities of invasion and probable defeat stared us in the face. Can any man honestly say that he had time to think sanely of fan activities and fanmags or anything else outside of his very existence at the time? We were so bewildered at the turn of events -- bad news following bad news -- that despair crept into our hearts for a while. Again we felt we had done the right thing in suspending activities.

This was undeniably proved when the great air attacks were launched against Britain. It would have been impossible to have run meetings or worthwhile publications under those conditions -- chaos was everywhere in London and other cities. Power-lines cut, transport in a tangle that it seemed would never be unravelled, nights spent in bomb-dodging, in beating the bombers by getting to one's raid shelter before darkness caught one in the streets or on a railway. Mad weeks -- heroic weeks -- hours taken to do a few miles to business -- walk, hitch-hike, queue for hours for a bus, travel by water, train, and walk some more -- get in a surface shelter and listen to the bombs smack down all round.

Were these times to carry on a fan Association? Should we have carried on? Could we have done so? You tell me!

Above all these things, however, there is one factor that DAW has entirely overlooked. The main source of magazine supply had ceased. Half of the interest in science fiction was taken away, and we had but our own thoughts and expressions to contend with -- good material without the mainspring to drive it. Our colleagues in America will not be subjected to such a stringent test. They are at the source of supply, and they will have something to work on, come what may. Also, their inland cities at least will be unaffected by air raids -- their coastal cities may never be subjected to continuous attacks. Fans in New York will certainly be able to carry on their activities without hourly interruptions, and will probably lose very little sleep at night.

Certainly, the London group found themselves having meetings after two years. In other cities in Britain fans were meeting as well -- the bonds of friendship that were forged in peacetime were strengthened by war -- but those meetings were not at all similar to the pre-war ones. The latter were science fiction meetings -- those now held are meetings of science fiction fans. 90% of the time taken up at these meetings never touches upon science fiction at all! There are too many other things to talk about -- of life in the forces, of leave, of friends and fans in remote spots and how they are doing.

Friendship was strengthened, not fandom, but that friend- 87 ship will lay a foundation for a far stronger fandom after this war than has ever been thought possible. The thin thread that we can call fandom in this country has been kept alive by a series of miracles; with every month taking further members away into some service it still amazes me that we have kept going at all. Our American friends will realise this as their own conscription gets into full swing. There is little or no time for fan activities when one is in the forces. A dozen correspondents are more than anyone can comfortably handle, even with a typewriter, and those few hours of leave are so precious that, despite one's intentions to do something in the fan line - it usually gets left undone.

To the numerous fans in this country who have helped to keep fandom alive we owe a great debt -- to Arthur Clarke for his "Fan Mail", the chain letter idea that whipped the fellows in the forces into activity again; to Michael Rosenblum for continuing Fido under the most exacting conditions, and to all those who supply him with material; to MacWebster, Sam Youd, John Burke and his colleagues; to the newer fans whose names became prominent -- Don Doughty and "Renny", Arthur Williams and many others -- each managed to chip in with something that kept the movement going. To these and all those silent members who have supported activities, even if only by subscriptions, we owe a debt. They kept us together through one of the blackest periods of our history.

Therefore I am vitally interested in this experiment that has been forced upon the fans of two nations -- both with the same ideals and hopes, both at war for the same cause, but both subjected to entirely different conditions. Time will prove the Americans' pathway -- ours has already been decided. We carry on despite the difficulties.

One further item from USA comes to hand -- Unger's FFF for January 3 carries "A Message To Fandom", by Louis Russell Chauvenet: "We are now entering a world conflict which may last for years and tax every resource of our powerful nation. Nevertheless the serious and menacing nature of the international situation does not mean that we should incontinently abandon our fan activities -- on the contrary, as a relaxation and recreation in a grim and terrible world our fan activities may be even more valuable to us than they have been in the past, in time of peace. We have before us the example of British fandom, which has held together under stresses of war much more severe than any we have yet experienced, or seem likely to experience in the immediate future. Remembering this, I have every confidence in the ability of American fandom to prove its worth by surviving undaunted in the difficult times that lie ahead of us."

Now you're talking, America! Good luck!

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## WEB'S WANDERINGS

ENGLISH FANDOM VISITED BY

! DOUG WEBSTER !

Naturally, I approached Leeds rather nervously. Apart from Genus Homo, which I'd been reading industriously on the 11-hour night journey from Aberdeen, I hadn't looked at a sf story for months. Such exhibitions of unfannish behaviour can pass unnoticed in the wilds of Scotland, where men are men and have hair on their chests. But in personal contact with top fans, it's bound to lead to awkward situations. I was scared of Michael Rosenblum before I met him; and Leeds didn't do anything to help.

It's a rum place. You arrive at 4 or 5 a.m., when any civilised city would be sleeping the sleep of the just. In the station you anchor yourself to a soldier or something that knows its way about in the blackout, and sally forth. It's raining. The streets are full of (a) buses, (b) trams, and (c) people, all of which shoot back and forth purposefully in the pitch dark. Where are they going? I don't know. In Aberdeen we work during the daytime. At night we play or sleep.

Michael met me automatically at the door. He has been meeting fans for so long that his ESP faculties are now tuned to receive those frequencies fans alone emit, and when one drifts into the district, he reaches up on his hind legs and howls eerily into the upper air. Obviously, he knew when I was coming. Later, unbeknown to him, I examined him carefully, but could find no trace of antennae hidden among his hair, he is thus neither fairy nor superman, but must have this ESP faculty built internally into his system. I noticed, however, that Michael wears the bottom button of his waistcoat fastened; but this I put down to oversight.

Michael is the Compleat Fan. He has a Collection - quite a large one, I think, although I remember little of it. Further, he has a library of fantasy books of which any fan might be proud, and if discrimination in literary quality has at times been overridden by the zeal for Compleatness, this is certainly offset by the sleekly perfect condition of his copies. More important - to my mind - is another large bookcase of catholic range, containing books well-thumbed and diverse. Acquaintance with Michael himself proves him to be well-read and capable of talking entertainingly on many subjects, a fact which his present fan activity gives him little opportunity to show in letters or articles. He also has specs, thousands of fanmags, one of his own (of which you may have heard), a slow-motion cat, a duplicator, and even a typewriter. Well, that is to say . . . no, it definitely is a typewriter.



We had fun in Leeds, but not enough of it. Michael was 89 later heard to swear that I was drunk when I arrived. This is not so. I don't think I came near booze in England till reaching Liverpool (that den of vice), where I frankly preferred the milk to the lager.

Still, we got around. We examined bookshops, to little avail. Future pilgrims would do well to note that Leeds is as barren of books as the Gobi. We saw Fantasia: I have supplied remarks elsewhere. I was slaughtered at ping-pong, being accustomed to slash the ball down a larger-than-regulation table. But I've since played on an even smaller one, and am prepared to give all-comers a beating. Every fan I know is prepared to give all-comers a beating at ping-pong. We must be a damn clever crowd.

Sunday we frittered away the time doing nothing, and exchanging an occasional persiflage. I stencilled a letter from Doc Lowndes for Fido, fainting twice over the machine at the lack of correcting fluid. We drifted over to the Club and yarned half the night. Michael, I observed, wore his bottom waistcoat button buttoned on Sundays as well; but maybe it's a custom they have in Yorkshire. He is an agreeable time-fritter-away-er. I have known better, but I'd be as well not to disclose her name. JMR is an interesting talker, though not in any way you'd expect from his letters. That is to say, while his letters are the logical projection of Michael's character, he in turn is only one of several projections that might be built up from his letters - and, incidentally, hardly the one I had formed. He is small and dark, his moustache looks quite natural, and the trilby almost a part of his head. He can produce a story or a joke to illustrate anything anybody says, and is in fact more the cosmopolitan than the escapist or mystic. He makes a wonderful business-man - and few indeed in fandom can boast of that!

Sunday, Eric Moss turned up too. An agreeable lad, Eric, chunky and cheerful. He has fun being a dispatch-rider, and more fun spreading communist propaganda both per pamphlet and by the immemorial chalk-and-wall method. This latter he has evolved to a fine art. He concentrates on lavatories, and finds that if you chalk on the rhodomontade at a predetermined level, the poor down-trodden capitalist dupe can't help imbibing it whenever he happens to be there. The editor of this magazine having communist sympathies, I take this opportunity to pass on the tip to any in a position to use it.

Monday, Leeds and me parted company. I went west; Leeds stayed with Michael. I bade him au revoir and hightailed for Manchester.

Manchester exists in a different world from Leeds. You know it immediately you steam into the station, and find the dome overhead all shattered and jagged, with the dark buildings behind showing through. Leeds has had, I believe, one air-raid since the

90 war began; Manchester has had many. In Leeds I found my way quite easily to Chapeltown, the trams marked "Roundhay" bringing back memories of four or five years ago - for to me, Roundhay had ceased to exist when the Mayer gang left the fold. In Manchester I was lost. But I'm safe now! I have the most beautiful map of the centre of the city, plus the approaches to Victoria Park, drawn by Harry himself. This is a document I treasure; it's sketched on a page taken from the centre of a graph-book, and sprawling over the remaining three sides is a map of the cultural centre of Liverpool, by John Burke. Manchester is shown clearly and delicately, with all the stations, theatres and Public Library clearly indicated; Liverpool is rather a collection of crude blocks with numerous asterisks showing the bookshops, and abounding in such legends as "The Tryst", "Ruins", "Parry's", "Restaraunt", or "Lewis's ruins". All odd corners are filled with the times of trains.

No 41 Longford Place shivers eternally with a drumming rhythm. This is due partly to the three typewriters housed therein, but more especially to the duplicator ceaselessly winding round and round as the presses throw out copy after copy of Zenith for the slaving public. Convicts from the local jail are sent up in batches to stand for hours at a time and keep the handle turning: murderers usually, or men who beat their wives. They also con-script passing fans. I bounded up the steps, threw my bag into the window, trilled the bell, and turned to admire the view. Two seconds later I swooned into Marion Eadie's arms.

Don't get me wrong, my brethren. This was through no fault of Marion's. For the purposes of description I will grant that Marion is rather easy on the eyes, a possible meiosis which will, I hope, set Ego yammering. But only Americans and any distant provincials will appreciate my reasons for swooning.

For the Manchester sky was filled with dozens - hundreds - thousands of silvery, roughly cylindrical forms, rearing away overhead and far off to either hand. Now I'm not the type of fan who walks around with a mind filled with Martian invasions or B.E.Ms but I'm durned if the sight didn't look precisely like a fleet of space-ships hovering over the city. Fans in the English cities will of course laff at my naivete. For while I've seen an occasional barrage-balloon out to sea, guarding the convoys that steam past





the NE coast, I'd never till then seen them strung out in a 91 webwork over a city. Leeds didn't have them. But all the way from Manchester to Liverpool - in Birkenhead and Chester - they hang like fat drops of silver overhead, an eery and impressive sight. In the next few days I kept seeing them out of the corner of my eye and wondering why the moon was shining in broad daylight. But I daresay you get used to it. It was related later how Sam Youd said the Southampton balloons were always drawn down under the cloud layers; when they were left above, the German airmen came over and potted them. Sportive lads.

Well, I picked myself out of Marion's feet and tried to look intelligent. She regarded me with a total lack of interest, and said, "You'll - be the Webster?"

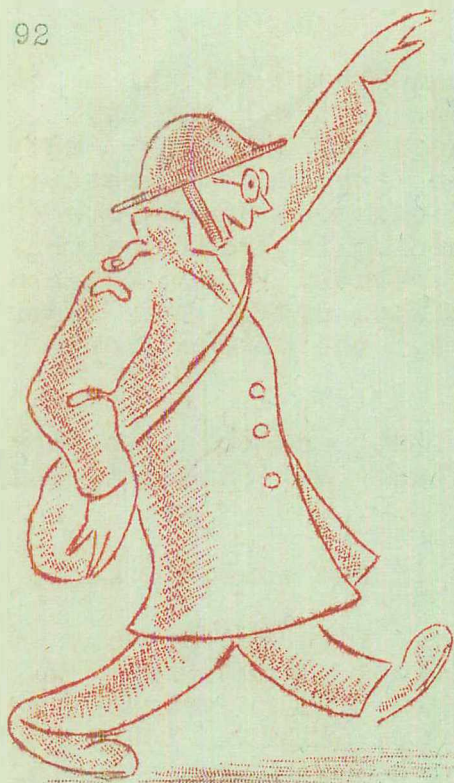
"Yes. You're Marion," I responded, as if she wouldn't know.

I recognised her in a vague sort of way. I've had as many as 64 snaps of Marion in my possession at one time, taken from all sorts of angles in all parts of the country. The geography was uniformly good, but no two of the 64 looked alike. I had long suspected Harry of running a hareem and not letting me in on it, and my mind's not yet at rest. This Dorothy Morton, for instance. But I found Marion a tall, rather slow-moving girl with blonde hair; a deep thinker, no doubt. Her voice is slow also, and very lovely. There are two types of Glasgow voice. The first is that appalling distortion of Scots which I associate automatically with the name Josh McNab; let's forget it. The second is the gentle, flowing type, which comes out slowly, like syrup from a jar. It probably snares the flies just as easily too. Marion's is this type, which is just as well. You'd expect Harry Turner to snap up - or be snapped up by - a girl like Marion. But I'll bet she's devilish lazy.

"C'mon in and stop writing articles," Marion told me, and I c'monned in and made myself at home. This is very easy in the Turner mansion, which is occupied by very friendly people, but not so many of them that you feel overpowered. Harry has chosen his parents well - very well indeed. The cat was stand-offish.

Anon Harry arrived. I met him in the half-darkness, on the blackout-shaded landing. "Well - Doug!" said a deep, deep voice, and a hand like a clamp crushed mine to a pulp. I muttered incoherently, as usual. Le Turner is fairly tall, and thin, and made of muscles. Dark, specs. Some of the time he looks like Don Wollheim, some of the rest he looks like Raymond Massey, and otherwise he looks like Harry Turner, which means he's a handsome devil anyway. He laughs at the world pretty continuously, and has never been known to experience depression.

We talked. We took tea. We adjourned, read books, dissected fanmags, and talked, waiting for the nightly alert. Harry is a part-time air-raid warden, and so wanders about the streets of



Manchester every night so long as the blitz is on. Officially, I mean - I don't know what he does on his nights off. Pretty soon the sirens went, so Harry and I hefted on our coats and Marion hauled out the machine to write some letters. Having got rather behind-times through skedaddling round the countryside, I asked her if she'd answer some of mine for me. Nay, replied the wench, coyly: she'd love to help, but she couldn't kick up so insulting a style as I did. Preening myself visibly, I trailed after Harry, and we sauntered up and down Longford Place.

This warden business is a racket. I don't know what a warden does apart from hailing other wardens in semi-official terms, giving the secret sign, and exchanging a hoarse and rapid "Man-chuniensis!" They also have meetings, lectures and exams some nights, under cover, and I've no doubt they attend these in communal pink shirts, giving the password of the day, joining in the chants, and perhaps being stuffed with the catch-phrases which are the sine qua non these days. Be that as it may, the raid seemed to differ little from those we have in Aberdeen. Maybe it was louder. The noise was impressive, and once or twice we sheltered in a doorway from the shrapnel which (as I recall) didn't arrive.

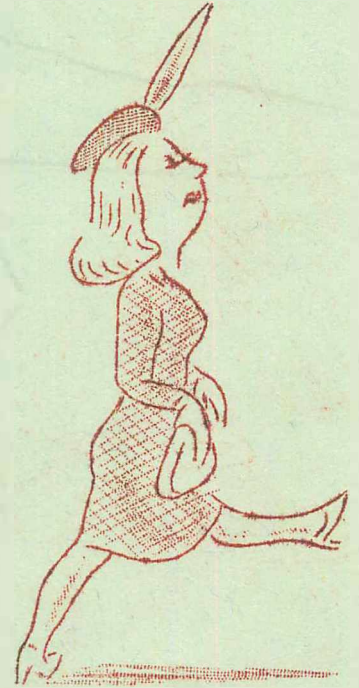
Down below, we patrolled next to the boss of the district wardens, whose name I forget - Pop something, I think - and the Twins. The Twins are Morojo-like in size, exuberant, and mentally Siamese. Harry is torn between marrying them or Marion. Both choices have their obvious advantages.

After a while we went back to the house and stood in the doorway talking to Marion, watching the flickers of flack reflected in the windows opposite, and the flashes of bombs and trams shooting up behind the houses, guessing from the thud and the shake of the bombs how far away they were falling. We talked desultorily about astronomy and the BIS, and some type of literature - Thomas Mann, I think - and hiking, and sex. Or maybe I'm thinking of two other guys. At any rate, the All-clear sounded eventually, and we went in and drank cocoa, and Marion went to bed, adjuring Harry to tell her all the best dirty stories next morning.

Harry and I weren't very sleepy, so we gabbed. The cat - a thin grey one, probably a Viton in disguise - took its shawl into the oven and settled down for the night. American fans were put



in the test-tube, boiled and filtered. We agreed about American fans. Next, US fan art, always a subject of great amusement in GB; we agreed about US fan art. We agreed about Harry's art. We agreed about art. Going further afield - you've no idea how daring we were - we agreed about fans, fanmags, stf, politics in a general sort of way, and the superiority of Scots wenchery. That's the devil of it: I found I just couldn't argue anything with Ernie Turner, because we always agreed about everything. So we thought we'd make it a day and go to bed. Harry's bed is like his politics - built on communist lines. It is well able to hold more than two - indeed, should a post-war Convention ever be held in Manchester, it's probable that all the delegates, provided they're not too mixed, could bed down with Harry; but more of this anon. In bed we spent an hour or two - it seemed quite a while - finding out that on the whole we agreed about communism. We might have saved ourselves the trouble. After that I suppose we went to sleep.



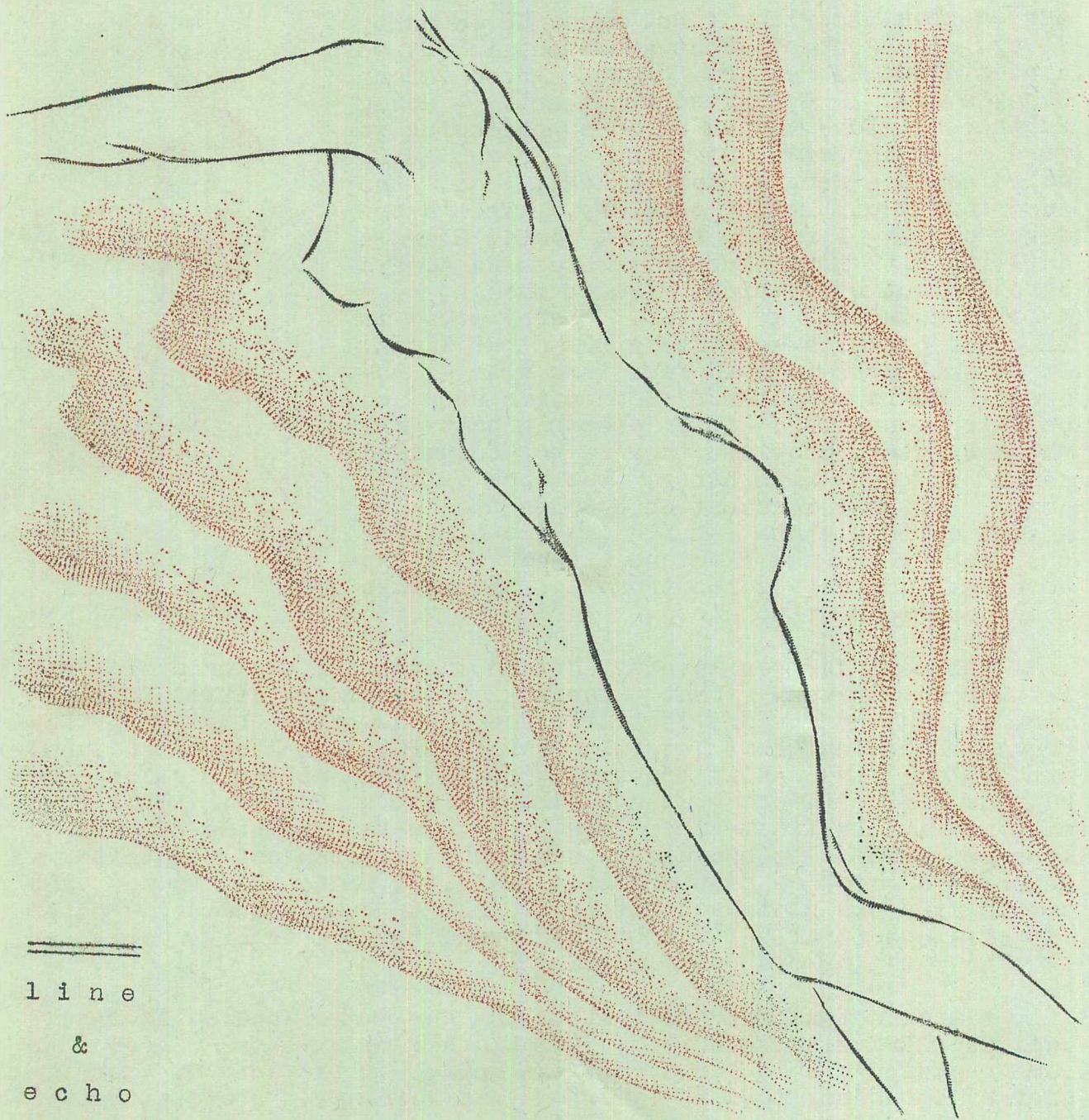
The next day was Tuesday and on Tuesday I explored what was left of Manchester. But wandering about strange cities in war-time without companions is little fun, and after buying a few books and having some visiting cards printed at Lewis's (deuced cheap, too) and making friends with the chap at the station enquiries office I went home and talked with Mrs Turner. This is a more profitable line, since Harry's mother is very like him and no less agreeable. We had dinner and washed up, the cat maintained a determined poise on the back of a chair, I wrote RGM to say that sex in Fido was getting a little too hot to handle and he'd better lay off; and finally I caught an afternoon train to Liverpool. At last to visit my old pal Joan Burke!

I took a taxi from Central to the new Burke Mansion in Thing-wall Hall Drive. JERennison, who paid all my expenses (I sent him some magazines) paid for my taxi as well, and the driver, looking over my shoulder, told me my friend was waiting. Home at last! The garden path was overgrown with grass, but I bounded up it with all the usual abandon.

And here we stop, just before a series of climaxes which build up to the saga's end.

Read next issue about Joan, the Ghoul, Abe, the Manchester Congregation, the Liverpool Meet, the Empire in ruins . . .





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Don't blame the Postal Authorities for the delay in receipt of this issue - it's our fault. We hit the Doldrums, as Bob Tucker has it, and just lost interest in the whole thing. However, we're back again and the June issue should appear early in July - we have hopes of the August Anniversary Issue appearing in August!

We'll do our best, but . . .

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## RELATIVITY RHYME

Kimball Kinnison once had a fright,  
 For, when travelling faster than light,  
     He received, with aplomb,  
     A kick on the posterior;  
 'Twas his front coming back on its flight.

## DIMENSIONAL DILEMMA

A venturesome fan from Kincaid,  
 Four-dimensional travel essayed;  
     He got in a spin  
     And returned, outside in,  
 With his innards uniquely displayed.

## CAUSTIC COMMENT

An inimical fan cried: "My eye!  
 ZENITH's awful: don't aske me to buy.  
     For it's all milk-&-water,  
     No death-rays, no slaughter,  
 And the nudes are just fit for a sty!"

SOS!HELPZENITHSOS!FILLTHEGAPSINYOURCOLLECTIONSOS!BARGAINSSOS!SOS!!

## QUIZ

? ? ? ?

## QUIZ

Ⓐ Are you a collector?

Ⓑ Do you want to help finance ZENITH?

Ⓒ If the answer's yes, mebbe you'll be interested to hear that we've decided to liquidate part of our collection. First items for disposal are the following copies of AMAZING STORIES:

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	JANUARY 1928 & WINTER QUARTERLY 1932.	
2/- each ...	SEPTEMBER 1928, JUNE & NOVEMBER 1929.	Ⓑ
1/6d each ...	MARCH 1928, JANUARY & AUGUST 1930.	
9d each ...	All issues from JUNE 1938 to AUGUST 1939.	Ⓒ
3/- ...	SPRING QUARTERLY 1930.	

ALL POSTAGE PAID!!!!!!CASH WITH ORDER!!!!!!FIRST COME FIRST SERVED

# The Cliché Expert TESTIMONIES O N SCIENCE-FICTION b y

MAURICE K. HANSON

---

"First of all, might we have your expert testimony as to what science-fiction really is?"

"Well sir, science-fiction is extravagant fiction today; it is, however, fact tomorrow."

"Really? And what of tomorrow?"

"Tomorrow never comes."

"Then surely science-fiction is rather absurd?"

"Not at all. It broadens the mind, stimulates the imagination, imparts a knowledge of science . . ."

"What kind of science?"

"Sugar-coated science; science that is easily digested by all from the schoolboy to the trained engineer. Moreover, it tells a warm human story, vibrant with life of other worlds, other dimensions, of the far distant future and the forgotten past, of far-flung galaxies remote in space and time."

"And who writes this kind of stuff?"

"Dreamers."

"Unpractical dreamers, I presume?"

"Hardly that. They portray man against the stars, I agree, but at the lucrative rate of two cents a word."

"Indeed. How does one make a start in this profitable pastime?"

"One needs first of all an unhackneyed theme."

"And interesting characters I suppose?"

"The characters are unimportant. Provided, of course, that your heroine can dress the hero's wounds with soothing unguent and wear garments that reveal rather than conceal her youthful figure, and that your hero can wield a ray-gun . . ."

"Can wield a what?"

"A ray-gun. In the world of the future when science has advanced apace and man wages implacable warfare with alien menaces, as often as not a ray-gun is what he uses."

"To produce a death ray, no doubt?"

"There are many forms of ray. The heat ray sears, chars, or crisps its victim. The disintegrator ray reduces him to an impalpable cloud of floating dust and has the advantage of not producing the sickening stench of burnt flesh."



"Very convenient, I'm sure. And what more do you need in 97  
a science-fiction story?"

"Effects."

"Such as?"

"Oh! I don't know. Shall we say incredible forces, unimaginable temperatures, inconceivable speeds or unbearable accelerations? Then there are fathomless abysses, impassable gulfs, unscalable peaks, razor-sharp crags, pitted craters and arid deserts. The impenetrable blackness of space bejewelled with stars, myriads of unseeing stars. Shimmerings - opalescent, iridescent or fluorescent. Waves of nostalgia, inexplicable premonitions, vastly superior mentalities, soulless robots, mechanical monstrosities, biological horrors, fiendish creations and so on. But that, of course, brings me up to the Wall."

"Which Wall?"

"The Wall Behind Which Science May Not Go."

"And what lies behind it?"

"Slimy pools of deliquescent corruption. That is to say, weird fiction. The unthinkable, unknowable, and utterly monstrous; the odd, ineffable and inexplicable. But that, I fear, is another subject."

"Some other day perhaps, then, Mr. Expert?"

"Thank you. I will be delighted to oblige."

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(Written with all due deference to Frank Sullivan)

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## QUOTING

The Engineer Jan 9th 1942

"In wartime, however, the latest products of scientific development are, so to speak, precipitated on our doorsteps and the nation becomes acutely science conscious."

\*\*\*\*\*

THEY'RE  
TELLING  
US!

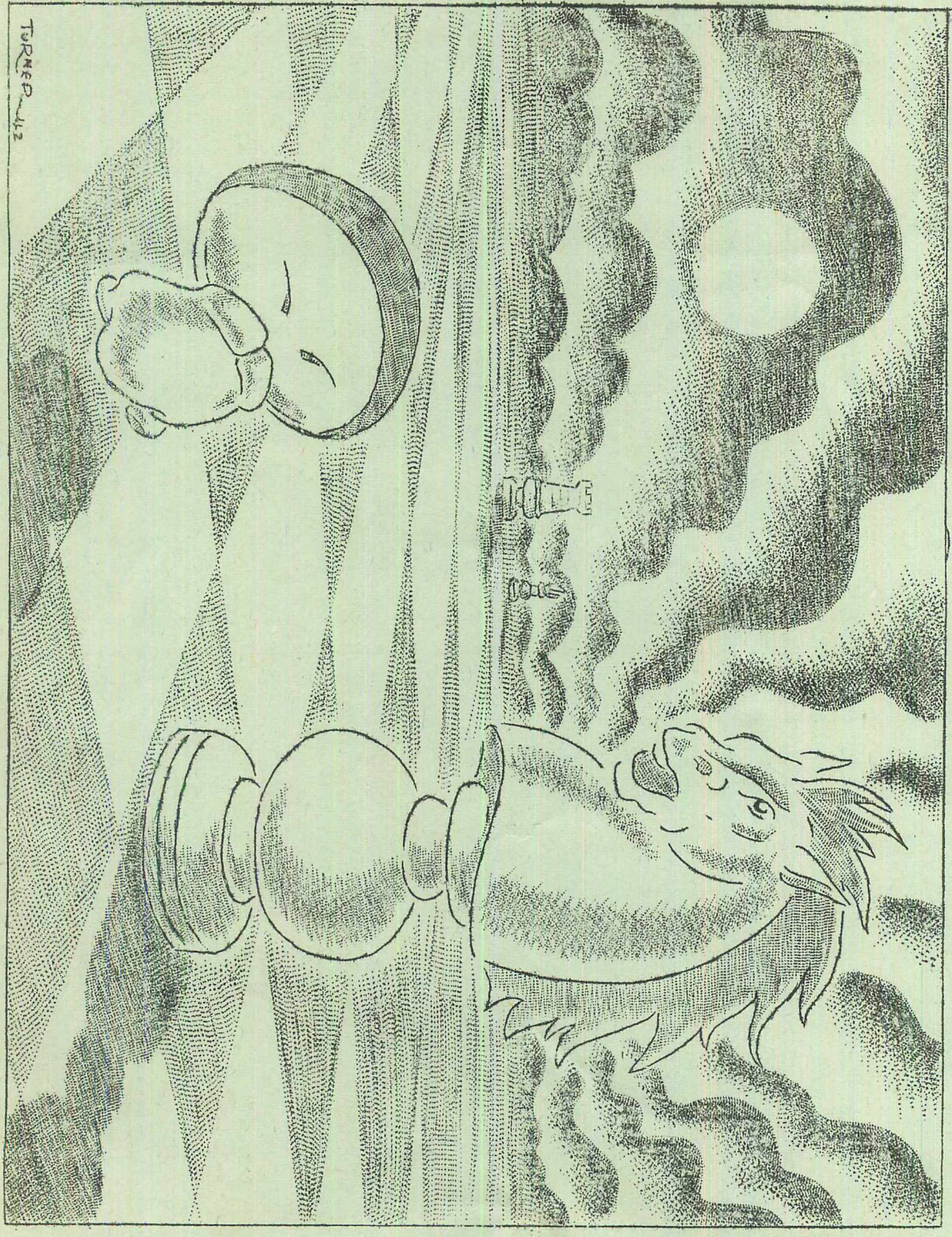
Contributed by D. R. Smith

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TURNER 412





"Never was so much said by so many about so little"

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We kick off with a withering blast from TED CARNALL:

"HOT AIR" ... those seven pages are the greatest crime you're doing. A sheer waste of space that you could use to a much greater advantage. Not only that, but Hot Air is dull, uninteresting, filled with the feathery ramblings of 'critics' whose sum total is to guide you along the lines of their reasonings! Not for public perusal!" /Is it a waste of space lads? Most seem to like it!/"

Always first to comment, ARTHUR CLARKE thinks that Impetus was "A most thoughtful & timely sermon, more important than many will consciously realise. I congratulate Sam heartily. I imagine that it is to some extent autobiographical: most of us have been" thru these phases of uncertainty so well depicted in the story. Perhaps it may help some of the still-undecided ones to make up their minds."

ROGMEHDURST is not quite so happy about the whole thing:

"Turning the luscious nude-bespattered pages I see our Samivel is still happily campaigning for his better world, fit for poets to live in. One would suppose this is all very well in its way for the younger fans, but one gets so tired of would-be philosophers who glibly trot out platitudes about the necessity of reforming Homo Sap., that miserable miscarriage of nature, without the slightest indication of how it is all to be done. One would observe here the same barbaric belittling of theoretical knowledge as we lately noticed in the case of Frank Edward Arnold. I can only say this: the feeling that one has of the steady unstemmable spread of his neurosis is for me very much more terrifying than the spectacle of Hitler & his crew. Youd draws our attention to the young hero sternly putting aside his books and political opinions in order to learn more efficient methods of killing his fellow men. This "To Hell With Culture" feeling swept over and submerged Germany in the 30's. I hope to God it is not to submerge Britain in the 40's."

SID BIRCHBY, however, agrees with Arthur:

"This is excellent stuff, and doesn't it hit home at some of us fans? Most true, Sam, most true, & I haven't a bad word against either plot, handling or viewpoint. One of my own failings is a flagging of morale every so often. It's so easy to sit at home in an evening, reading the latest fanmags, or to go out pub-crawling with other fans, when I ought to be swotting tactics or Russian. What a sorry state we are all in!"

EDGAR BLYTH joins the ranks of the debunkers:

"Oh Brave New Federal Union. Brave New Bunkum. It seems extraordinary that writers, above all, will never realise that man-

kind could not possibly be happy in their clean, intelligent, sunny, leisurcly cities. Pretty things to play with in the imagination, certainly, but not things that will ever come about or endure. As long as man is man, he will be ever anxious to run after some weird notion of honour or duty or deity, ready to defend his particular crackbrained beliefs about religion or social organization against those of all others, panting to spill his blood, tears and sweat for hypothetical and undefined abstractions such as freedom or glory. Man is never happy unless he is nobly sacrificing happiness for the sake of winning some mythical benefit. Observe the numerous & bitter wars fought under the guise of religious differences and for the sake of religious tolerance which is no sooner won than it becomes valueless to a generation for whom religion has no significance, without having made mankind one whit more tolerant in other matters. I deplore Mr Youd's unfounded optimism, and think his writing lacks sincerity."

Disillusioned and dejected, MAURICE HANSON thinks that:

"Impetus wasn't too bad but I've yet to find a Utopia described that doesn't seem namby-pamby, snobbish or desperately dull. C.E.M. Joad reviewing Stapledon's Darkness & Light remarked how much better Stapledon described the dark & dismal future than the good and happy one. I suppose Blake summed it up in four words -- 'Damn' braces: 'bless' relaxes."

Zenith has acquired a Film Critic to wit JOHN C. CRAIG:

"Saw Dumbo the other night. Was a little disappointed except for the Pink Elephants scene which reminded me of De Chirico and Salvador Dali in motion. Thot it'd have reminded you of sumpn else! I find that Disney's crowd are adopting aspects of realism that seem to be mistaken. In the early part, scenes are shown of a circus tent being erected. Now these scenes are treated in the manner of direct photography & since direct photography & artificial sets could have produced equally good results, I fail to see the reason for the expenditure of energy necessary to produce them in cartoon. Had they been treated impressionistically it would have been different... It seems that the camera has done away with the necessity of realism, or pure representationalism in art, because it can do the job of recording so much more efficiently. Attention, Ragatzy & Web! This no doubt explains the violent reactions of the surrealists in their desire to escape the fact & find a new form of expression... The amusing part is that the best known devotee is Salvador Dali whose painting technique is almost photographic in style. His use of the brush is really remarkable, and for this reason, & his uncanny blending of unusual colour combinations, his work stands out."

Talking about art, ANTON RAGATZY has a grievance to air:

"To me, and apparently to Webster too, Diana appears to be a representation of the upper portion of a fairly well-shaped female body - done with a fair amount of skill but containing certain faults in drawing which, while not making the drawing worthless,



need pointing out to the artist. You, instead of gratefully acknowledging such helpful and constructive criticism, or at least wordlessly displaying it .. refuse to admit the existence of such errors in figure drawing, & claim that an apparent error, such as the inhuman hand, is representational of some mystic & abstract quality. What a strange & mysterious craft that introduces beauty in a misplaced navel!"

[Exaggeration or deliberate distortion of nature doesn't necessarily indicate bad draftsmanship. Study The Modern Movement in Art by R.H. Wilenski, page 18 onwards.]

DEFINITELY OUT OF PROPORTION - NOT A WORK OF ART!

101



diana has broken up the Burke household, too, as JOHN BURKE writes:

"Joan & I argued bitterly about the merits of your art, particularly diana, which she views in the same way as Doug. I am all in favour of you & your excellent defence, which quite justifies the piece in question: I told Joan it was the stance and whole effect that counted, not the details; you more or less echo this - or am I the echo? Ignore the Philistines and the "Turner is a lecherous dog" movement that seems to be growing. Ignore the exaggerated enthusiasm of the undoubtedly lascivious "let's have more nudes, yum, yum, yum" blokes."

[As ROLAND FORSTER puts it: "Don't let the proods keep you away from noods, which are lood only when crood" !/]

Odd comments on the Assyrian lass in last ish from:  
TED CARNELL

"You've made it darned hard to find the lady -- well, not-exactly, she's on page 67 and just about the most restful little item my eyes have rested on since Forrie had a nightmare last year."  
ED MACDONALD

"I almost think thou hast converted me: that there Study is a bonny lass, a juicy morsel, in fact altogether a tasty dish."  
DON DOUGHTY

"Study - and what a study! Ignore Webster on nudes, diana was swell, but you have diana beaten to a frazzle this month."  
EDGAR BLYTH

"Another naked female! I confess I see no difference between this lady and the others that have appeared in previous issues. What a pity science has not yet perfected the technique of raising infants in bottles and rendered unnecessary this worship of so-called feminine beauty." [Say, are you Man or Mouse?]

In anticipation of enquiries as to the fate of Study II, we present top American fan 4SJ ACKERMAN:

"The stencil<sup>lovely</sup> -- she not only is "passable" but well nigh unsurpassable! Just wait'll we get our ink on her. I scarcely can wait to roll her into the bed! (Hey, I'm talking about cranking cyps into the mimeo container, ofcourse... don't get me rong!)"

7We nearly did7 Vomaiden Portfolios have been discontinued til the spirit inspires me again but your grand fantasyren will be featured in the next (\* 23) VOM... What a gorgecus femme is Z. Do U noe, I have xrpted that reclining rarebit from the Feb ish & put her on the wall amongst originals & fotos. The only piece of fanmag art to be so honord -- if such U choose to consider it." 7We blush!7

The final word on the subject is from MAURICE HANSON:

"I unhesitatingly give full marks to the study of the reclining nude (an almost unprecedented event) 7What? The nude or the rash squandering of marks?7 which must be the best bit of stencil-cutting ever."

Marion's tale met with a mixed reception; DENNIS TUCKER was amongst the mystified:

"The Gateway of Atem was so much Chinese to me. I suppose I am exceedingly dumb, but I can't reconcile the two parts. Does anyone care to help me? 7Roland Forster will: see below!7 For good style in writing and nice descriptive pieces I give it 7."

JULIAN RAG - Whoops, Parr-don us! - ANTON RAGATZY moans:

"This is a tale which needs more attention than I can give it but I cannot allow it to pass unscathed. The writing itself is the simplest aspect upon which to comment: the descriptive style is done in a conventional manner, over-exuberant & vague language; what indescribably horrified reactions I had to reading: "After many eons, or millions of eons, for how was he to know which?" ... Of what value is criticism to authors who use with great abandon, such phrases as "dim brightness"? 7You'd be more at home in a two value world, Anton; vide The Undesired Princess, UNKNOWN Feb/42.7

The tale itself is incomprehensible. It cannot be understood by persons whose intellect works in a naturally logical manner, 7Nothing natural about logic7 and if its author professes to understand its implications and emotional significance, she has made an inept and even fatuously distorted picture of such understanding - and fails miserably to convey such understanding to this reader, and, I hazard, to the majority of your other readers. who however, being sf fans, do not wish to acknowledge their non-understanding." 7Them's fightin' woids, brother!7

To confound Anton & assist Dennis, we present ROLAND FORSTER:

"Gateway of Atem bewildered me at first reading, but on re-reading I decided that it must be a portrayal of the delusions while unconscious, & of the final conscious thoughts before death, of a slave who was lashed to death during the building of one of the pyramids or of some Ancient Egyptian temple. MFE writes beautifully, but the meaning of her tale is far from immediately apparent."

Further to confound Anton JOHN C. CRAIG writes:

"I think I'm beginning to see what is the making of a good short story. It is this central idea: the intangible something that does not appear in the mechanical transmission of words to paper. This is why I give top marks to Gateway of Atem."



JOHN BURKE was bored:

"After doing such good work, Marion has let us down with this very ordinary example of fan fiction. I am tired of the Clark Ashton Smith imitators, from Lowndes downwards (or upwards)."

Whoops - we nearly forgot DONALD RAYMOND SMITH! He ses:

"I like it enough to be puzzled that I do not like it more. There is something lacking, something strangely ineffective in the style. I think that it is that we seem to be viewing the majestic dream from a spectator's position, which is fundamentally impossible, instead of being within the dreamer, dreaming with him.

I connected the idea of the dying slave in the story with Buddhism, chiefly thru subconscious memories of Kim's lama, who at last attained the goal of his pilgrimage, of his long patient suffering pilgrimage, and became aware of his soul being absorbed into the one great universal soul, having passed 'beyond the illusion of Time & Space & Things'... 'All is one & one is all' in the words of the prophet; definitely different from the Egyptian ideas of the after-life, which, as I remember the Book of the Dead, preached a purely personal sort of heaven attainable by a series of wangles necessitating a large & well-paid priesthood. Yet the picture of the slave dying of exhaustion in a characteristic Egyptian building scene appears to me to force an Egyptian background on to a story that seemed to have been placed further east. An obvious defence against this suggestion of an anomaly is the one used in Metropolis - "This story is of no time & no place". /We might even suggest that our slave had acquired a knowledge of Buddhism! /

Gawd! Wot is this! EGO CLARKE fumes:

"Misprint on p58!! Second para should read: "began to thicken at the rate of not a few inches ..." It's just silly the way you've put it. This was a deliberate dodge to make the reader think things were happening quite quickly, and then jolt him into realising that I was speaking astronomically." /We humbly apologise, grovel, & withdraw, hoping all is forgiven. /

A postcard from BILL TEMPLE informed us that:

"Cover is the weird fantastic excelsis. Impetus - it is no exaggeration to say that it inspired me in the way the play Thunder Rock did. A great effort, Samivel! Ego's yarn - just the Miracle of the Lily plagiarised. Quite well-written though, but there's no excuse. Your own passage thru Ancient Egyptian architecture is impressive, especially when linked with your passage thru the life class (e.g. p67). You are doing an unkind and thoughtless thing, though, in continually sending these nudes to an impressionable, sex-starved soldier, and may have to answer for the consequences. I'd say Abigail is a perfect thumbnail sketch of a period - except that stupidity is always with us."

Regarding Abigail SID BIRCHBY burbles gaily:

"The maturing weird tale. Thank God it wasn't wacky. When Americans write a weird tale, witch burns villagers; when British

write it, villagers burn witch; Campbell writes it, they burn each other!"

Languishing in clink (14 days CB) SAM YOUD found time to say:

"Dorothy's poetry is pleasantly young. I feel old now in comparison. Unfortunately, I read it just after listening to a couple of hut-mates discussing two Trowbridge girls on whom they had worked their wicked will the previous night. The implication was unavoidable. A soldier's life is not romantic (until, possibly, he gets down to killing); and to portray a soldier as romantic is to know very little about soldiers. The soldier --- even he who was formerly intelligent - becomes a creature of simple lusts & an ability to endure. And for all the high emotion Dorothy felt, she with her soldier boy-friend is directly comparable to the Trowbridge girls with Bill & Ron. Lest it be misunderstood, I may point out that of the soldier's simple lusts sex is by far the least pressing. This may be due to the bromided tea or just the strenuous life. I only know that the soldier is nearly always more seduced than seducing." /Knowledge born of experience?/

On the same subject JOHN BURKE enthuses:

"Dorothy Morton scores this time. This is an exquisite poem - I should hate to say any more. I almost feel like awarding marks this issue for the sake of giving the poem 10." /Aw, only almost?/

The lowdown on poets - by ACWL DOROTHY MORTON:

"A poet never gives his own views -- at least, very rarely. He always wants to show some other sad, beautiful or beastly emotion. He becomes - by understanding - impregnated with this emotion, temporarily, and his own views do not exist for the time being. Shall I say that it is rather like being without form or colour --- merely a spirit upon whom the sun of humanity shines in varying wraiths, shapes and prisms. Sensitive to every vibration of the hands of experience, or life."

A disclaimer from MR SMITH:

"I want to make it quite clear that I am not joining in this game of choosing the "finest novel in 50 years" as I do not pretend to have read a tenth of the acknowledged better class novels of the last 5 years, never mind 50." /So ya won't play, huh?/

SID BIRCHBY complicates matters:

"I agree with Death Ray Smith that Lean Men & For Whom The Bell Tolls are both well written books, worthy of lasting fame; as to the best novel in 50 years ... shall we get round the problem by deciding which one book we should choose to take if drafted overseas? I should choose Shape of Things To Come, not because it is my favourite but because it would remind me, in the narrowness of fighting a war, that there is a vision of better things. And then, in a fit of redecision, I'd toss into the kitbag History of the CPSU, /Hiya, comrade!/, Books of Charles Fort, Shakespeare, Pears Encyclopedia & Clausewitz on War."



JOHN BURKE does at least stick to the rules:

"Sam is rash to fling such enthusiastic declarations about, but we all know he will have changed his mind in a week or so and no harm is done. For Whom The Bell Tolls is almost the best post-war novel in the English language, but going back 50 years you take in an awful lot of first-class novels. Do I agree with The Magic Mountain? Hell's bells, I think so, but it's a ticklish question. What about Proust? Well, what? Can I count the 12 vols. of Remembrance of Things Past as one novel? If so, then the Hemingway, the Mann, and the Proust are my favorite three, but even then there are dozens of others. Without claiming that they are equal, I have derived much pleasure from Lawrence's Sons & Lovers, Huxley's Point Counter Point, and Maugham's Cakes & Ale".

ZEUS CRAIG insists on being serious about the whole thing:

"Finest novel relative to what? It strikes me as being just as absurd as the arguments I used to indulge in as to whether Beethoven was a better composer than Mozart! If you take a class & say that a certain book of its type can be voted for position 1, then I am with you, but this lets Hemingway out straight away because his type of book hasn't been published for a period of 50 years. I will say that he has been able to keep up his appeal to each rising generation. When I was of the opinion that he was the be-all & end-all of modern authorship it was his novel Fiesta that we considered the "finest for 50 years" etc. That was 10 years ago since when I have felt an increasing boredom with his work. I don't like an author to scream at me all the while "See how damned tough I am". Admittedly I haven't read For Whom The Bell Tolls, but I am obviously making no comment on this work.. Anyway, out of a welter of novels I would not dare to produce one and say this is the finest for 50 years!".

American fanartist TOM WRIGHT sends his support on the diana controversy:

"Those comments on diana in the letter section gripe me. Blyth's comments are interesting, but how anyone can prefer harsh angles to beautiful curves is beyond me. The male body is blocky and is even drawn at times as a series of planes, while the feminine form is a series of beautiful curves from top to bottom. And some gals have nice legs too, Tom To Webster I can only give one big raspberry . . . I notice that some English fans do not think much of the American nudess. Gawd, I hope they don't take those Vomaidens as being representative of our type of art! Don't think we like 'em any more over here".

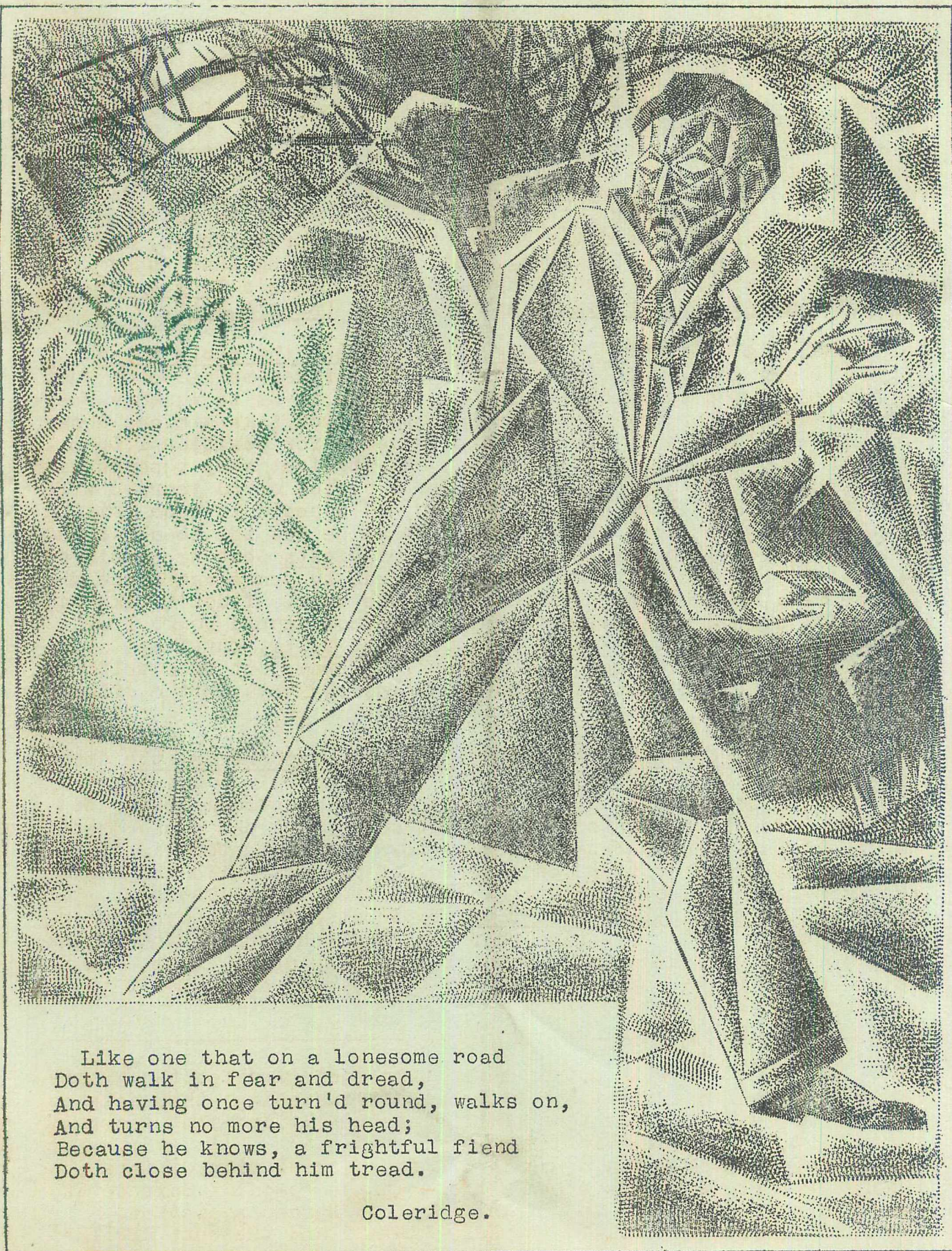
finis

\* To Hell with mutual admiration societies for the glorification of science fiction - with cliques insisting that science fiction is anything more than entertainment - with the recently formed British Fantasy Fan Federation!

WE support F A N A R C H Y - a free association of fans who reserve the right to heave half-bricks at the ju-ju of Science Fiction and refuse to heed the dictates of any insane societies.

\* Further developments in the July FANTAST and the next ZENITH !





Like one that on a lonesome road  
Doth walk in fear and dread,  
And having once turn'd round, walks on,  
And turns no more his head;  
Because he knows, a frightful fiend  
Doth close behind him tread.

Coleridge.