

NO, MATES. THIS IS NOT GOING TO BE CALLED ARCHTYPE. NOR FOR THAT MATTER IS IT GOING TO BE CALLED EITHER OHUN, ERCAT, lethARCHIE, MARCH, MORANG (or MORRANG, GORANG, VORANG OR BORANG), MORASS, OH, OREL, PELAGO, RECREM-INATIONS, SOUPKNIFE, THE SWILTHY FINE, TRAG, TRUMP DUCK OR WUH - all of which I have seriously considered, liked a lot, and decided reluctantly against for some odd reason or another. For instance, for several days I was absolutely sold on MORANG (pronounced like the pudding) until it came forcibly to my attention that such a title should properly be the prerogative of somebody named Moran or nothing. You can see how attached I was to it by the frantic attempts I made to produce something closely akin to the original - alas, none of them when it came to the point had quite the same sound, so I had to abandon the entire series. Then THE SWILTHY FINE - my only reason for rejecting that was that I was in un-fannish company when I first thought of it, and the association is too painful. TRUMP DUCK too I liked more than most - but then, I realised, to an outsider it could only suggest a combination of cards and cricket - neither of which I have any love for. So one by one, each was in its turn eliminated, as were several more I can't recollect and one or two I'm still keeping in reserve against possible future occasions.

This left only one possibility, probably on the whole the least intrinsically appealing of the lot. So after clearing it with Bob Pavlat, I decided that (failing any even better last-second inspiration) that this would be entitled

# AMBLE: 1

And AMBLE No 1 it therefore is. And oh - the above spiel should if I'd had my wits about me have been in its turn titled PREAMBLE.

Anyway, this fabulous firstish is perpetrated by ARCHIE MERCER of 434/4 Newark Road, North Hykeham, Lincoln, Eng. (E&OE) It flauntingly proclaims itself

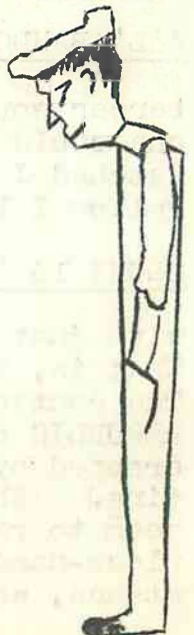
## A MERCATORIAL PUBLICATION

which means that it emanates from the Caravan in the Shadow of the Malleable Ironworks, upon which be industrial peace.

Also, it's designed to form an integral part of the

TWENTY-THIRD OMPA MAILING.

The character to the right, yclept Fabulous Fred, is a strictly fortuitous creation that sprang originally to life amid the surface-ruin of a cutting-board, and this time Jim Cawthorn has been good enough to commit him to stencil for posterity, on the grounds that he's a somewhat better stencil-cutter than me.



IN A PREVIOUS incarnation, this column was known as OMPARADE. (As a point of strict physical fact, the first instalment was actually headed "HERE COME THE ABDABS AND I HOPE YOU LIKE IT"). But what the hell, now I've gone and gotten myself a new title, I might as well exploit its possibilities to the full. Therefore from henceforward it is the Mercatorial intention to review the mailings under the ambilical (huh?) title of

## THE SHAMBLES

OE TRAILS 22 (Ron Bennett officiating) In itself, still a worthy piece of work. There was one important comment I had to make though, but as I hope you'll have noticed long before now, I've already made it.

FIJAGH 3 (Dick Ellington) Trouble is, I've had this so long now that I'm no longer in the mood to review the thing. It's not that I've grown tired of it or anything, if only it had arrived AFTER the mailing instead of before it'd be fresh and like that. In the mean time, let's just say that it continues to fascinate. Except that is of course for the repulsive-type cover, which I regret not to like.

FIX 2 (Ken Potter) And how's THIS for an obscure piece of title-drawing? You can't hardly LOOK at it, let alone read it. Poetry, by the Pound - well, this bit "You came in out of the night and there were flowers in your hands", taken in isolation, is highly evocative and simple and direct to boot and in fact just about everything that poetry should be and so very, very seldom is. The rest of the piece is simply a let-down following the almost biblical beauty of the opening two lines. As for the play script, all I can say is that I'm FAR too sensitive to dig this sort of thing.

A'L'ABANDON 5 (Jim Caughran) I see you spell me "Bercher". Well, if a berceuse is a lullaby, I suppose a bercher would be a lullaby-singer or something. If it was "berceur" one could simply say it was a male lullaby, but that's too far-fetched I teenk. Oh - er - yes, pleasant commenting and red-on-yellow I like too.

BLUNT 14 (Sandy Sanderson) On the other hand, except in the special case of GRUE (which could get away with just about ANYTHING), I've never cared for white on blue. That is, blue on white, I seem to be mixing my colours or something. The contents on the whole are another matter though. THE Argentine REPUBLIC agreed (though I rather think that the article is normally dropped by the inhabitants, ditto the republic part, leaving Argentina.) What's the dropped word after The Bronx, though? And I seem to recollect that French and German have far more articulated place-names than English - Die Schweiz for Switzerland for instance, and practically EVERYWHERE according to the French. L'An-

gleterre for instance.

DUPE 5 (Mal Ashworth) And here we have Mal actually REVIEWING A MAILING. Or at least part of one. However, those that are reviewed are acceptably so to say the least. And it isn't right to say "It isn't right to bring someone with you and then eat them" - the two pronouns that refer to the same party should be of the same number, surely.

ERG 3 (Terry Jeeves) Nearly 50% of the population is subnormal in intelligence you say - come to think of it, I think you've got a valid point there. That "nearly" touch does something to it, too - makes one see visions of one lonely little "normal" person right in the middle, with 25 million-odd to either hand.

AN INSPIRING MESSAGE FOR A NEW DECADE (George Spencer) Oh.

GRIFFIN 3 (George Spencer) FROZEN crumpets? Is that POSSIBLE? And the small plaid cow, and the episode of the doughnut-hole-pokers' con - and the green paper, and most of the remainder of the thing too if the truth were known.

GRIST vol 2 no 1 (Ellis Mills) a. I see what you mean - I think. b. Noted. c. But surely the whole point about Millzines is that they're strictly for the fleeting moment of enjoyment. Any attempt subsequently to ref back to any of the contents in specific particular, as distinct from a subsequent casual dip or a complete re-reading, is foredoomed to failure.

STRAIGHT TALK (Ellis Mills) An inspiring message for a new decade.

MARSOLO 5 (Art Hayes) No, you will NOT be plagued with pre-supplements to No 15 - or even with post-supplements to No 14. From now on, all you'll be plagued with is AMBLEs. And I'm not at all sure but what this story isn't a cut above the normal fan-written story - it appears to have a certain air of originality about the gimmick. But precisely WHAT are the couple on the cover supposed to be doing?

PHENOTYPE Op Crif CXLIX (Dick Eney) Either that means a hundred and forty-nine, or it's the name of the editor's pet - er - "grulzak" is the word, gnespah? Come to think of it, I can't recollect seeing any belt-loops on trousers since they disappeared during the war. Personally, I always wear a belt with not a loop on its circuit, (well, then not ALWAYS, and it has a loop pertaining to itself rather than the trousers), and they seldom fall down even the way I'm built. Ideally though, I should imagine that loops might be an asset. Though again, come to think of it, trousers these days usually seem to be designed to stay up of their own volition, without either means of external support. Not on me though - and I wouldn't be seen dead in braces, hence the Mercatorial equator. (Pretty fabulous in the tropics too).



GRIFFIN 3 again Having just read over the previous page of this, I seem to have slipped - the general tone of the review was intended to be complimentary, not incredulous. And the "ref" in the GRIST review's supposed to be "refer" of course. On with the mainstream -

POOKA 9 (sounds like a dog with French lice) (Don Ford) Too brief. You can do better than this, Don, and frequently have if memory serves.

SATAN'S CHILD 7 (Dorothy Ratigan) The gardening bit amuses even though, having no wireless or telly, I'd never even heard of the bloke before. I like Jim's persistent cover-characters, too, and there's sundry other worthwhile bits among the remainder. But oh, the blank and half-blank pages you waste, Dorothy!

SCOTTISHE 19 (Ethel Lindsay) The second book-length novel I wrote, a mundane though far-fetched adventure-story, running to some 140 thousand words as against the 125 thousand of the first one (or possibly vice versa), DID have a heroine called Kay. And a hero called Leo, and a vice-hero called Heck. Heck was due to be promoted to full hero in the sequel that I was going to write once the thing had been accepted. No, you won't be getting chunks of this lot in OMPA - I consider it a far better job on the whole than my first attempt, and it can stay intact. I'm quite proud of parts of it - such as the sequence set on a raft at sea, in which a number of things keep happening climaxing with the birth of a baby. (HE was supposed to take over as hero some 20 years later, when he was grown up and I was a big name novelist). Then there was the episode where, cornered on an obscure island with two rival bands of villains looking for them, the heroes FIRED AN ELEPHANT AT THEM. (They exploded a charge of gunpowder into the pair wee beastie's pair wee backside, and it took off in most determined manner in the desired direction). I had some lovely openings left open for the sequel, too, and some wonderful characters lined up including an Australian who was attempting to canoe right round the African continental coastline.

SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM THE CINCINNATI FANTASY GROUP Straight talk.

STEAM vol 5 no 1 (some Bulmer or other) Yes, but what's the USE of it all. Even the prolific Grennells haven't produced enough copies to put into the smallest apa yet.

WILD PUMBLES (Andy Young) Now THIS is what I mean by a Youngzine, not one of those three-quarters-strangled poetry-books that keep on popping up from overhead. I like this muchly, the quotes on the back page perhaps even more than muchly.

FANMARK GREETING CARDS (Bjo) Delightful as they are, I can't help feeling that distributing them broadcast

is altogether the Wrong Use for them. They should have been hoarded in secrecy by the perpetrators, and used precisely as per their face values in selected cases. One genuine unexpected instance of just one of these cards being used thusly would have been worth all the wholesale souvenir distribution imaginable.

MORPH 22 (John Roles) ODZA (something) NOT HER - huh? Re your query, the Oublietted epic must have taken at least a year to write. Including both the doing of a rough draft and typing out (in triplicate if you please) a fair one. My other novel (see SCOTTISHE review) was even worse. Being a civilian at the time I didn't have out-of-hours access to a typewriter, so wrote it first of all in rough draft on toilet-paper (seriously - I found it extremely effective, and a whole chapter could all go on one roll), then copied it out again as neatly as was conveniently possible, then when the first publisher or so had rejected it with the comment that they never read holograph submissions in any case, I purchased this monster at a government-surplus place and typed the whole thing out again. (After all that, and sundry more sf-slanted shorter items later on, I eventually came to the conclusion that I didn't LIKE writing, anyway. In fact I don't know how the hell I ever did it. I certainly couldn't face sitting down to writing an entire full-length novel ever again.)

paraFANalia 4 (Bruce Burn) "Oh flobber boggies gloop" deserves to go down to posterity as an Immortal Saying. Euphonious, sort of, not to mention fraught with meaning or something. And "Sterling Moss won. Only he did it with an 'i' in his name" is also a noteworthy line. Otherwise, this rambling personalazine is simply fascinating, in the best tradition of rambling personalapazines.

FOOLISHNESS (or possibly WHOOPS!) (Bruce Burn) Seems to belong to the above, same with the Inity Theatre (well that's what it LOOKS like) programme. Handsome swine this Burn character, isn't he.

SCOTTISHE 18 (Ethel Lindsay) I'm not quite sure how come there are two SCOTTISHES for review this time, but who am I to complain? That's a horrible-looking contemporary zombie on the cover. Oh hell - MORE questions on the Oubliette. Let's see now - I finished it in the year I was demobbed - '47 - at which time I would have been approximately - twenty-five from forty-seven leaves 22. In my lower 'twenties say, anyway. (Come to mention it, how old were YOU at the time, Ethel?) Those Glasgow transliterations, the one I like is "Fellafellaffalarry". Rather in the "Kindly summon a doctor, my aunt has the measles" class, besides being internally euphonious.

WALDO (Eric Bentcliffe) Impeccable-looking and withal pretty readable as to content. In fact, taken all round, probably the best item being reviewed on this occasion. I have but one complaint, and that is that Eddie's drawings of the Liverpool group, though undoubtedly good as drawings, aren't for the most part recognisable for those they are intended to portray. One thing I notice is a definite Freas influence leading to undue exaggeration at the expense of recognisability. His "Norman Shorrocks" definitely has a Freas-inspired face for instance, most certainly not a NormanShorrocks-inspired one. The most recognisable are John Owen, Norman Weedall (though surely his face is fatter than that), and Nancy. The notion of including the complete set of Shorrocks is a worthy one, too.

JD/ARGASSY 48, 49, 50 (Lynn Hickman) Probably the best fanzine that usually fails to inspire me to comment as it undoubtedly deserves. Most good fanzines - and plenty of worse - inspire me to assorted comment, but JD/A just goes on being indispensably indescribable or something. That's a terrific Barr cover for 48, and the conphotos in 49 reveal what I had not hitherto suspected, namely that Eddie even LOOKS like Kelly Freas. As for this QUESTIONNAIRE (sic) that's mixed up in the pile, it's probably too late to fill it in now, but I must mention that as soon as I came to the question "Do you find you tend as you grow older to enjoy nonfiction more?" I immediately thought "How the hell did YOU know?"

MAILING COMMENTS 4 (Dick Ellington) Digested.

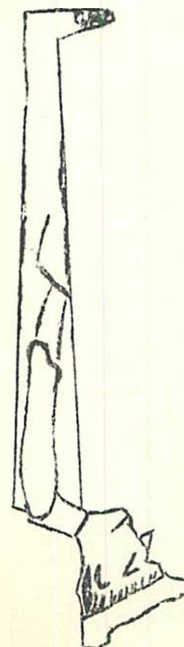
KOBOLD 0 (Brian Jordan) I realise this isn't officially an OMPA-zine, but I seem to have got it in this pile, so I may as well take the opportunity to welcome the perpetrator among our ranks.

Which clears 'em to date. Four-and-a-bit pages of it. I was hoping to keep this to eight pages (touch wood or something, but I may have to run it off myself this time), but two pages of the Lair plus the plan Belle wanted will run to over that now. Before I formally close the Shambles though, I'd like to point out that the strong theme of "Remember the Oubliette" that seems to be running throughout is due to the fact that when reviewing a zine I always look at ITS review of MY products to see if there are any specific references to pick up. And when I find them asking me questions, I usually come out and answer 'em.

PS. Here is JD/ARGASSY 51 (Lynn Hickman), which for once is red hot, having only arrove

today (28 Jan 1960), let's see if for once I CAN think up something contemporary to say about it. Cover - oh. Fake Fan in London - still almost as readable as it is interminable. Fandom Confidential on Ackerman - this differs from its predecessors (I teenk I'm right in saying) in that it indulges in a mort of exaggeration whereas the other articles could be read as straight reporting. Still comes out a pretty fair item though. Books - the Duplicated Man by Jas Blish and Robt Lowndes - wasn't this in one of the Lowndes zines some time back under the bylines of Blish and Michael Sherman? The Trend illo is very well done but what the Fred's it supposed to be? And that's it.

Fabulous Fred  
Can stand on his head.





I HAVE A page to play with. So I'll use it to make a few remarks and queries, not enough to dignify by describing them as a column, but with enough substance as distinct from the rest of the thing to justify their being collectively entitled

## PERAMBULATIONS . . . . .

Recently I came into contact with the work of one Moondog. Moondog, 'twould seem, is one of the Sights of New York, a blind musician who peddles his compositions on the streets by day and performs them by night. His instrumentation is astonishing, he having command over a remarkable array of assorted instruments a good few of which he has (so it says on the sleeve) invented himself. He gets telescoped rhythmic effects by beating a drum with claves, and apparently also manages to play a wind <sup>or string</sup> instrument simultaneously at times.

Maybe one of our invaluable Transatlantic members could throw a little further light on this intriguing character. Is he white or coloured, for instance? (I guess white, but it's certainly not for certain). Then, in some of his more complex recordings, does he have outside help with some of the instruments, or are they double-recorded, or what? "Autumn", my favourite, for example, employs French horn, flute (or recorder) and rhythm simultaneously - and most effectively, that track given the right treatment would easily make the top ten. (Though of course somebody'd spoil it by setting it to words). Mitch Miller'd love it, anyway.


The record ends with a long rambling monologue over jangling strings. This, though of course musically the least appealing part of the record, still has something. Some of his sayings are quoteworthy epigrams, some are seemingly utter nonsense, some are prose and some are sort of rhymed, some are simply sentences wrenched out of context for no particular reason (and to no particular point that I can see), the whole taking up nearly half one side of a 12" lp.

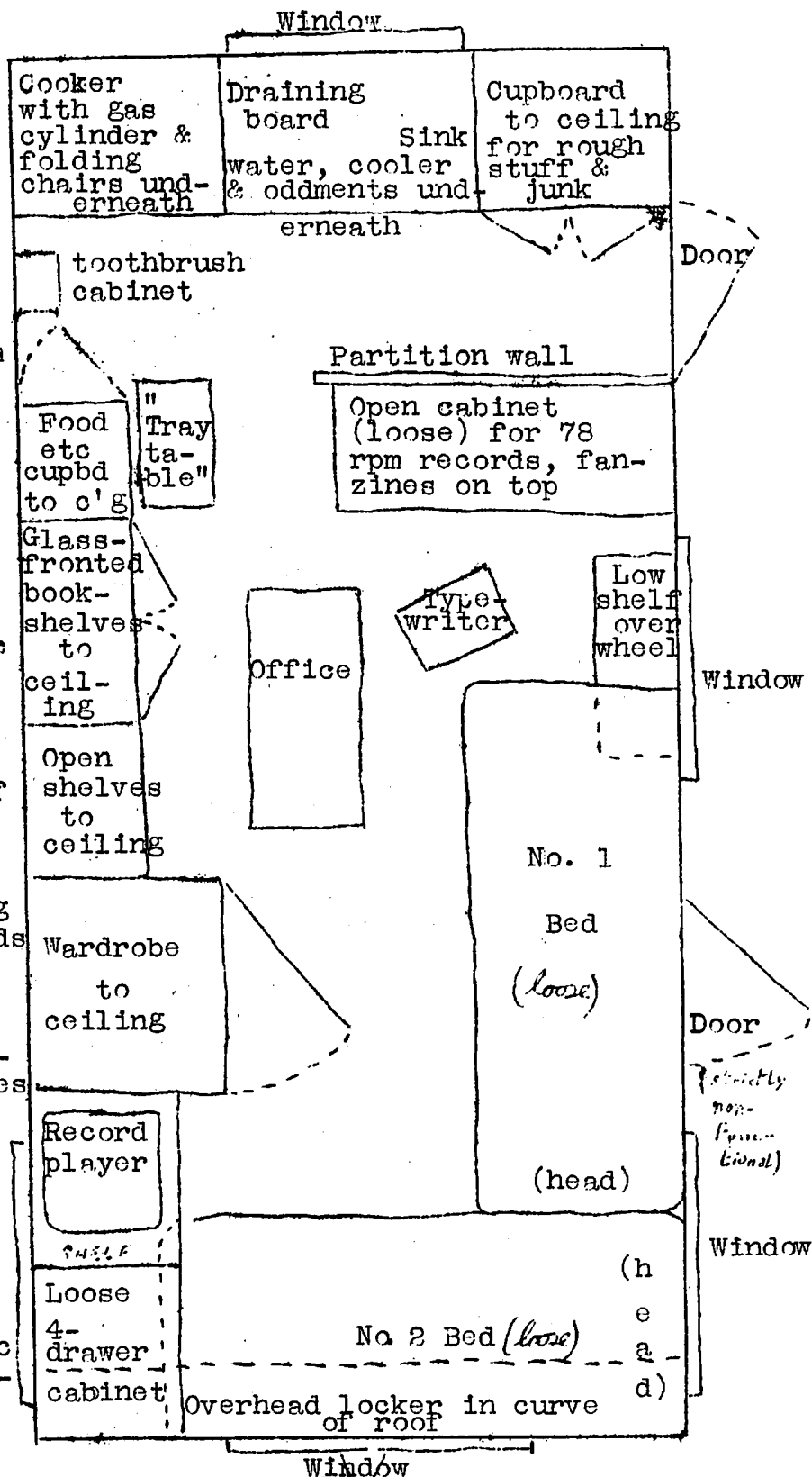
Another American performer I tend to display a liking for is good ol' Thos Lehrer. I've got his second lp now, melodically it isn't up to the standard of the first and his voice seems to have suffered over the years (or perhaps, being a concert performance, it was an off night) but the material, and the playing, is as superb as before. A couple of things I don't understand though, perhaps somebody over there could help me out again? What, for one thing, is the "Autobahn Society" - or am I mis-hearing things? Secondly, consider the following: "Mozart." (Dead silence). "Or one of that crowd". (Loud laughter). Most of the laughter's legitimate-sounding in the context, but that bit definitely isn't.

I'd like to hear him playing the piano without vocal accompaniment in any shape or form. It may be heresy, but I think that as a solo pianist he'd be at his absolute best. (And, if he tried, I'm pretty damn sure he could be devastatingly satiric without saying or singing a word, too).

### Notes.

1. The "cooker" comprises 2 rings and a grill. But where else could one find chairs kept under the stove?
2. "The Oubliette" is actually the bottom (floor) shelf of the food cupboard.
3. The fanzines are kept in boxes geographically on top of the record cabinet.
4. The "Office" is an alleged "tv stand & record cabinet" that serves as a useful adjunct to the typewriter (on a stool). The office chair is of course the foot of my bed.
5. The open shelving holds 33/45 rpm records current files, BSFA stuff etc.
6. The wardrobe contains all spare clothes and linen, plus more junk and the concertina.
6. Heating is provided by window an electric fire under the overhead locker and an electric convector by the typewriter. Lighting is also electric.

7. The flatbed lives under the open shelving, is set up on the sink when in use. Which is as little as possible, natch.  Towbar





## LAIR OF THE LEADEN-FOOTED FANCY . . . . .

## PART 3

BRUNNER, JOHN                      Echo in the Skull  
                                      Acquired since I covered the Bs.

HARRIS, VIVIAN BEYNON      Trouble at Hanard  
                                      A book strictly for the humour, which has carried me through at least three readings to date. There's a plot of sorts, but no central character in particular. I'll quote a bit of the last page though, to show you what I mean about the humour.  
                                      "Now, Vicar," said the Colonel, "will you say grace?"  
                                      "Grace?" asked the Vicar, in a loud and startled voice.  
                                      "What is it?" enquired Grace, from down the table.  
                                      "I asked the Vicar to say grace," said the Colonel.  
                                      "Well, he' s said it. I heard him," replied Grace.  
                                      And so on.

HEINLEIN, ROBERT A.      The Unpleasant Profession of Jonathan Hoag  
                                      Star LummoX  
                                      Novelettes  
                                      No comment.

HENDERSON, ZENNA              The People  
                                      The six stories complete, extracted from F&SF.      Otherwise I don't think any comment's necessary either.

HUGHES, DENIS                      We Moved in Shadow  
                                      A straight adventure-story. The same name has also appeared (though possibly with double-n), on certain sf-type pbs. This specimen, however, I definitely liked.

HUGHES, RICHARD              A High Wind in Jamaica  
                                      A peculiar novel, for adults but about children and seen mainly from their point of view - though largely at second-hand. (That makes sense to me, I hope it does to you). I first read it in my teens, but I got far more out of it coming back to it recently when it was republished.

INNES, HAMMOND              Maddon's Rock  
                                      This is the one Hammond Innes story I've come across that I can read again and again. It's another simple adventure-story, like all his that I know of, but he usually doesn't quite make it. On this occasion though, he most certainly does make it.

INNES, MICHAEL              Stop Press  
                                      The Secret Vanguard  
                                      The survivors of the Penguin quintet published last year or so. There are still several of his I've read before that I remember more than kindly though. Trouble is, I don't like detective stories as such, but only for their other qualities, which in his case can make them enthralling or not depending on how his whim runs at the time.

JEPSON, SELWYN

Tiger Dawn  
 A Noise in the Night  
 The Qualified Adventurer

Selwyn Jepson's long been one of my favourites. Some of his earlier stuff (and he's been writing since before I was born I think I'm right in saying) is impossibly melodramatic, but since those days he's turned out a respectable quantity of first-class adventure stuff. "The Qualified Adventurer" (which I've also known under the alternative title of "Manchu Jade") is a very old favourite of mine, right in the very top class of adventure-writing.

KERRUISH, JESSIE DOUGLAS

The Undying Monster (hard covers)  
 The Undying Monster (FFM version)

This year some time I'll definitely have to read through the hard-cover version of this to compare it with the magazine version. After which I'll presumably dispose of the latter. Except that the latter has some magnificent Lawrence illoes.

KNIGHT, DAMON

Four in One

Only a novelette, but I happen to like it.

LEIBER, FRITZ

The Green Millennium

Maybe this won't survive re-reading - but it'll at least get same.

The Big Time

LEINSTER, MURRAY

The Laws of Chance  
 The Last Spaceship

The L of C is a magazine extract. The other one's one of the few specimens of "good old days" sf that I can still (or at all) stomach. Perhaps because it isn't so good old as all that or something.

LONGRIGG, ROGER

Wrong Number

This is a sort of several things book, part slapstick, part sex, part trying to argue that what strikes me as bad taste (the turning of Dr Faustus into a musical, with at one point - I swear it - the good Dr singing a twelve-bar blues with fake-negro accent) is actually good taste, and that no taste at all (exemplified in some of the other characters in the story) is bad taste. It also has some scintillating conversation-pieces, and all in all is quite a book in spite of the abovementioned fallacies.

MacDONALD, John D.

Planet of the Dreamers

I think "Wine of the Dreamers" was a MUCH better title. But wine's one of those words that add something to ANY title.

McHUGH, VINCENT

I Am Thinking of My Darling

How the hell this outrageous essay into the realms of plausible fantasy ever collected THAT stupid title - - -

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 "SHE HAS MORE SEX IN HER LITTLE FINGER THAN BURGESS HAS IN HIS THUMB"