

GIMBLE

#1, was put together by Ted Johnstone,
at 1503 Rollin St, South Pasadena, Calif,
utilising a world created by the minds of
Fabulous Pasadena (and South Pasadena)
Fandom. Send letters of comment, please.

DAWN MEETING

THE RED SUN was creeping up over the edge of the desert, fortelling another day of unrelenting heat. The small man on the grey horse looked ahead with relief to where the rising mountains caught the first rays of light, promising a cool haven and a life-saving spring. For four days he had been traversing the barren land of tumbled rocks and jagged outcroppings of stone, travelling from dusk till dawn and sleeping through the day in the shade of some weathered formation. Now, with the edge of the desert in sight, he began to feel more at ease, deciding it hadn't been so bad after all.

His thoughts were interrupted by a distant sound. Hoofbeats, drumming through the cool stillness of the dawn, were approaching from somewhere back in the desert. He turned in the saddle, to see a dark stocky pony, obviously near exhaustion, being spurred onwards by the rider, a great blond bulk of a man. A heavy two-handed battle sword, decorated with gold and intricate carvings, swung at his side. As he came nearer, his horse, unable to sustain the pace, stumbled and fell headlong. The rider was pitched forward, but somehow managed to turn in the air so that he landed on his feet, a short distance away. The rider of the grey, half dismounted to give assistance, stared in amazement at this feat of co-ordination, then descended and went towards the stranger.

The blond man pulled out his great sword, which he handled as easily as a willow wand, and pointed it at the smaller man. "Hold!" he cried. "By my blade, identify yourself. I am Rontel of Linn, the mighty warrior."

The smaller man pulled a somewhat tarnished rapier from its scabbard, and said, "And by mine, I am Tedron of Methylonia, not a warrior at all."

"Then go in peace," Rontel snorted, replacing his sword, and turning to his fallen horse. It lay there, nose and flanks covered with lather, sides heaving. Rontel looked it over, then said, "There's nothing wrong with you. Get up!" and emphasized his command with an un-gentle kick in the animal's ribs.

Tedron came hesitantly forward, and said, "He looks exhausted. Why not let him rest for a few minutes?"

"Bah. If I can ride at a gallop for a day and a night, he should be able to. This is the third horse that has collapsed under me in the last four days."

Tedron, seeking a little knowledge of this warrior, and endeavouring to change the topic of conversation, asked, "Where are you bound in such a hurry?"

Rontel shrugged. "Oh, somewhere over the mountains in New Scotland. Perhaps to Conqueror, the pirate city, or even Londonia. There should be plenty of riches and opponents worthy of my mettle there. And where go you, little friend?"

"I too am bound for Conqueror. But I carry my riches with me," he said, and touched his forehead.

"So?" said Rontel. "You carry a jewel in your head like the toad in the legend?"

Tedron laughed. "No, friend," he said. "Lacking the strength of one like yourself, I must live by my wits. I am a minstrel, a jongleur, a scribe, and a fortune teller."

"Minstrel and jongleur? And a thief too, no doubt," commented Rontel, "as they all are."

Tedron shrugged. "Isn't anyone, given a chance? You've probably done your share of taking, I'll wager."

"Of course. But as part of war, or in open combat. I wouldn't go sneaking down an alley like a rat, or pick a man's purse."

"It takes as much talent to lift a man's purse as it does to beat him down with a broadsword. If you were my size you would have to learn to sneak down alleys sometimes."

Rontel considered this, and decided not to press the matter. He looked at Tedron carefully. "A little man like you shouldn't be out in the open desert without protection. I have fought off two bands of robbers in the last three days."

"Oh? I haven't seen anyone since I left Diaspar."

"You've either been lucky or blind. But they can tell poor pickings, or a colleague. Probably decided you wouldn't be worth the trouble of attacking."

"Indeed. And right they would be. I could give them neither riches nor a fight. But I suppose you could give them a good deal of either, am I not right?"

Rontel scowled. "Are we going to spend the day in idle chat? Already the sun is climbing. Let us continue to the mountains before the heat of the day bakes the last juices from us." He strode back to where his pony lay, seized its bridle, and managed to force the animal to its feet. He looked at it keenly, then said to Tedron, "You're lighter than I am. We'll trade horses."

"Why?" asked Tedron. "I'm perfectly satisfied with my grey. Suppose I don't want to trade horses?"

Rontel looked him over coolly. "My horse is tired, but you're an easy rider. I am a fast rider, but your horse is in good condition. And," he added with incontrovertible logic, "if you don't care to trade I'll take your horse anyway, in a fair fight."

Tedron looked up at the big man, and decided he had a distinct streak of native intelligence. He smiled politely, stepped back, bowed, and said "Be my guest."

Rontel flashed what could have been a smile, but looked more like a sneer, and said, "Thank you." He unfastened the saddlebags from his pony, which stood with legs apart and head hanging, and tossed them over the grey, dropping Tedron's almost-empty pack to the ground. He swung his sword out of the way and mounted.

Tedron began to mount the stocky pony, but as he did its legs buckled beneath it, and it collapsed on the rock. Rontel looked back, and said, "I'm sorry to leave you so soon, friend, but if I stayed any longer you might try to steal my jewels, and then I should have to kill you."


Tedron smiled at him. "Never fear; two such comrades as we must surely meet again sometime."

Rontel laughed. "It may be, little friend, but don't look forward to it. Enjoy your life while you can," and so saying, he spurred up the horse and galloped away.

Tedron sighed, looked at the pony, who was beyond his help, shouldered his light pack, and began trudging towards where the mountain peaks caught the splendor of the morning sun.

-the end-

AN INTRODUCTION TO COVENTRY

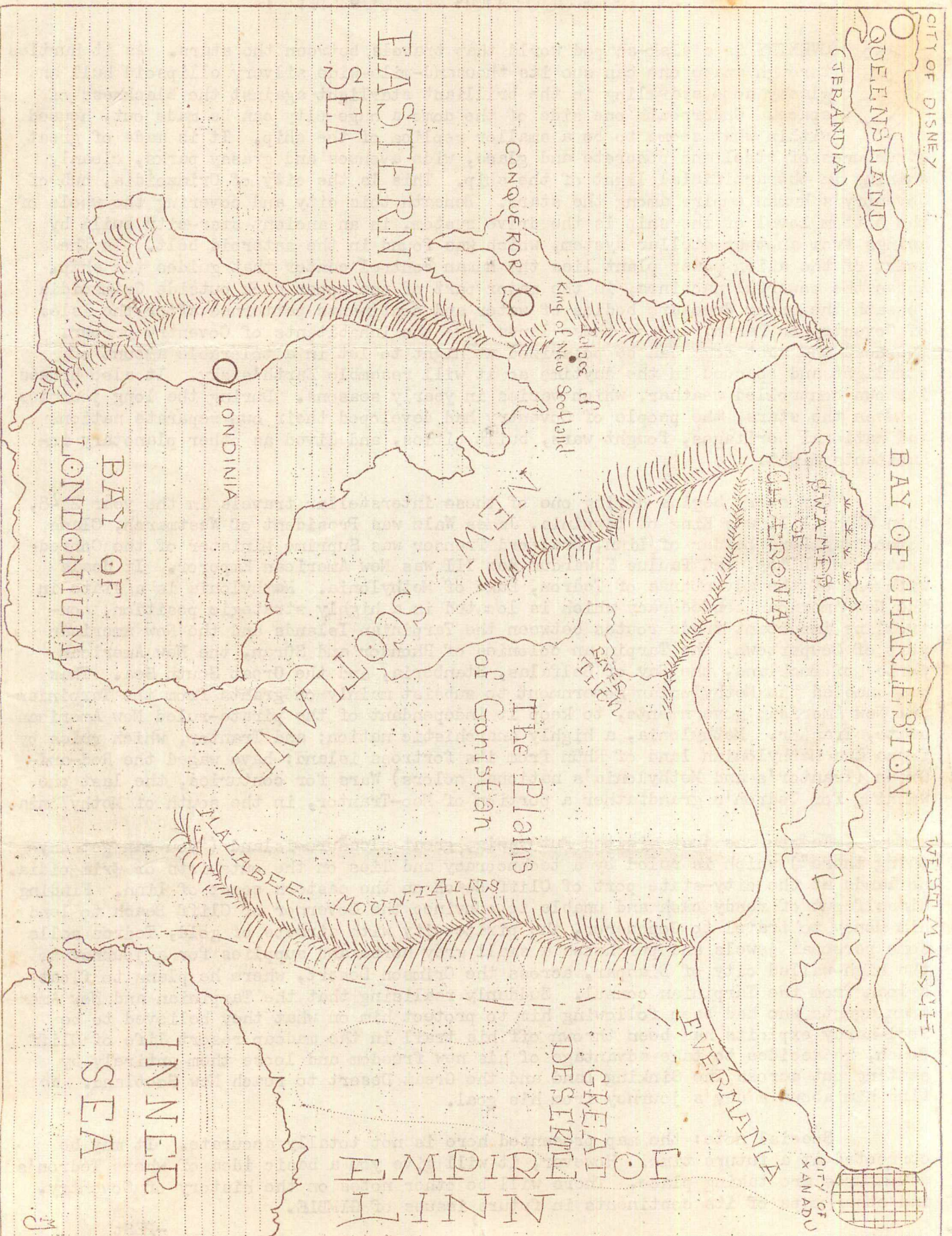


COVENTRY is a disk-shaped world that travels between the stars. As it hurtles through space one can see its thousand-milo-wide silvery ollipsoid hull and glassy dome sparkling in the brilliant starlight against the blackness of space. Underneath one side of the dome a huge city can be made out, housed within what seems to be a smaller replica of the ship. It is made of great structures of steel and concrete and glass, wide avenues and grassy parks, cleanly shining in the artificial light of the ship. This is the city of Crimzoidia, hub of Coventry's human empire among the stars. Beneath this city and covering the whole of the bottom level of the ship is the drive system, in an ancient star-city built by beings from another stellar system, which was found in the asteroid belt. In the heart of the alien power plant lies the human control center that guides the ship. Above the powerful machines, in the major part of the upper deck outside Crimzoidia beneath the outer dome are bodies of water and continents patterned after the Isles of Coventry on Earth, and on these lands live the inhabitants of Coventry proper. Overhead the vast dome can be polarized at night to let in a tolerable amount of starlight and opaqued in the daytime so it will resemble Earth's sky. It also houses its own controlled weather, which varies in yearly seasons. During the long journies between the stars, the people of Coventry had developed their own separate nations and national heritages, fought wars, built cities, and lived as other planetary inhabitants might.

Our story begins during one of these interstellar travels in the year 2348, when Mikhail II was King of Tarpinia, James Walz was President of Westmarch, Clane Jomnor was Lord Leader of Linn, Bradford Tenser was Supreme Minister of the Confederated Republics, and Paulus Edwardum Rex III was New American Emperor. It deals with one of the adventures of Tedron, Duke of Methyлонia. Methyлонia is a state in the New American confederacy which is located in a highly strategic position, controlling important trade routes between the Tarpinian Islands and the New American port of Cowpertown, the Tarpinian colonies of Rhondor and Suran, the New American ports of Buckland, the Bay of Belfalas, Stanberia, and the Great South Sea. This has enabled the Methyлонian government to subsist mainly on grants from the Tarpinian and New American governments, to keep it independant of the pirate-ruled New American state, Trantor. Methyлонia, a highly anarchistic nation; and Trantor, which rules by force the Methyлонian land of Rhin from its fortress island; have waged the Red-and-Green (Trantor's and Methyлонia's national colors) Wars for centuries, the last one winning for Tedron's grandfather a portion of Neo-Trantor, in the south of Methyлонia.

Tedron has just visited Futurania, great pleasure-island ("you can get anything there") which is ruled by a technocracy and lies on the outskirts of Crimzoidia. He lands at the city-state port of Cliff Beach on the eastern coast of Linn. Finding himself out of ready cash and unable to convince the Governor of Cliff Beach to lend him money to travel to Conqueror, the pirate city with streets of gold, Tedron sells some personal jewels and purchases a small grey horse and supplies for a journey to the high-walled city of Diaspar, across the Crimson Desert, where he plans to float a loan from the Tarpinian consul. Suddenly realising that the Tarpinian and New American agents who had been following him to protect him on what they believed to be fool-hardy exploits had been thrown off his trail in the madcap resort life of Cliff Beach, he decides to take advantage of his new freedom and loose them entirely by setting out across The Sinking Land and the Great Desert to reach New Scotland. We find him about a day's journey from his goal.

Special note: the map presented here is not totally accurate. It may be corrected at a future time. However, it will give you a basic idea of where Tedron's adventures are taking place. There will be other notes on the history of Coventry, and other maps of its continents in future issues of GIMBLE.



CITY OF DISNEY

QUEENSLAND

(GERANDIA)

BAY OF CHARLESTON

WEST MARCH

CITY OF XANADU

SWAMP OF
CHIRONIA

EVERMANIA

Palace of
King of New Scotland

CONQUEROR

The Plains
of Gonistan

EVER
THORN

OLONDINIA

NEW
SCOTLAND

MALABEE MOUNTAINS

EMPIRE OF
LINN
GREAT
DESERT

EASTERN
SEA

BAY OF
LONDONIUM

INNER
SEA