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NO. 2.



# SURD

NO 2

IT'S A LONELY and not a very proud thing to be a postmailer to FAPA nowadays. Even Elmer Purdue renounces all that he has formely held sacred, and contributes ELMURMURINGS to the regular bundle. If things had worked out, SURD and GOONCONTACT would have been there too. However, I have only three weeks left before I'm bounced out on my neck. I can't risk mailing my stuff to Eney for inclusion in the bundle in case they get held up on the way and don't reach him until after the 11th of May deadline.

My very finest curses are heaped on the heads of those members who voted against retaining the thirty days grace period for activity requirements, -- may their staples rust, their paper crease, and their daughters elope with George Wetzel, -- but at least I've made it for this time, and should be around for the next 12 months or so. I hope.

SURD, of course, is a rushed on-the-stencil thing and I apologise for it. I originally intended to contribute a long epic concerning my marriage to Princess Margaret (strictly fiction of course...and fantasy fiction at that...ordinarily I wouldn't dream of marrying the girl), but it is still unfinished and will have to wait until a later mailing. It will be realised that at procrastinating I am no mere apprentice.

Collectors with an unbearable faunch to possess complete files of each and every fanzine will be maddened and saddened to hear that DAG has the only copy of SURD #1 outside of the British Isles.

It should be noted that SURD is not an attempt at reviewing or commenting or anything like that. Ho no. This is just a few things that occurred to me as I read through the last mailing. I would have liked it to have been a lot bigger --- I enjoy everything that comes through FAPA except free tickets for football games of the past -- but I'm in a bit of a panic at present with most of HYPHEN on stencil and a cover dated for April. It will be about 40 pages and it will take all my spare time up till the end of the month to run the thing off.

All right, start reading the thing.

C. R. Harris  
"Carolin"  
Lake Ave  
Rainham  
Essex  
England.

HORIZONS  
(Harry Warner Jnr)

Wouldn't a lower-case teletype lead to ambiguity between the #1 and the letter 'l'? In my own job, (I work for the parts division of Ford Motor Co), we get lists of parts numbers via the teletype. These are a jumble of letters and numerals and ambiguity between numbers and figures would be both chaotic and expensive.

Intercourse and Paradise Pa. have been previously publicised. One of the back drops of the musical "PLAIN AND FANCY" was a map of the Pennsylvania "Dutch" country. Both places were marked prominently, and I can remember seeing them myself even though it was almost a year ago when I saw the show at the Drury Lane Opera House.

Incidentally the show was an unmitigated stinker, and the theatre has changed very little since Sweet Nell peddled her oranges during intermissions. It's one of the few remaining theatres in London in which smoking is forbidden, and I feel virtually naked without a cigarette in my mouth. If I'd known about this beforehand I would never have found out about Intercourse and Paradise Pa., but I have a habit of doing things the hard way. As soon as we found our seats, I whipped out my Players packet and my Ronson and lit up. Alarm! Panic! I'd barely pulled at the thing before a flunkey -- a real, honest-to-goodness flunkey in blue knee-britches, red jacket, 30 dernier nylons and a cute white wig, -- came whizzing down the aisle to ask me to cease and desist. I was so awed by the spectacle, -- I'd never seen anything like this before in all my life, -- that I extravagantly dropped the butt on the floor and stamped on it instead of pinching out the coal and thriftily saving the stub until later. I have never seen the ushers in fancy-dress at any other London theatre, but at the Opera House they were all wearing the rig, -- even the old boy in charge of the men's room.

As I said, the show was corny, --- but there was one thing that has been worrying me ever since. Those blue velvet knee-britches seemed to have been made on the same sort of pattern as the old-fashioned winterweight 'bloomers.' Does anybody know who was the unnamed benefactor to all mankind who invented the ordinary, mundane buttoned fly?

GEMSZINE  
(G.M. Carr)

I can't see why I, or any other European fan, should comment on that little snippet you published about the "Apathetic English" compared to the "industrious Germans." It wasn't all that long ago that you were telling Jansen off for commenting on U.S. affairs and I do not care for the idea that we are permitted to discuss European affairs with you but not allowed to mention anything concerning the U.S. However, -- I guess I'm just a sucker for flag-waving despite the fact that it's hard on the typing finger and that I'd rather write about religion, -- however, .....

Basically, all of Britain's troubles stem from one fact. We are spending fifteen thousand million pounds a year (multiply by 3 to get a dollar total) on defence alone and we just can't afford it. The biggest reason for the way Germany is invading our export markets is due to the fact that we've been cushioning them to the tune of £150,000,000 a year and conscripting the cream of our young men to provide an army for them. Personally I find it surprising that we have any damn markets left at all. Even in N.A.T.O. we are contributing far more in comparison with our resources than any other member, -- including the U.S. of A.

Sooner or later -- probably as soon as we have an election and return a Socialist government again, -- we'll break away from this fairy-godmother outlook and put our international commitments on a more realistic basis. Our defence expenditure could go where it's most needed -- into industrial investment, -- taxation might be lowered, and Germany can pay and supply its own army. Then we could see about the apathetic British as opposed to the serious, reconstructive Germans.

Religion is what I'm itching to talk about though. I've been following you on your road to Rome ever since you set off, and have enjoyed reading your views even though I violently disagree with them. I had a rather similiar experience myself about four years ago. I was hoping to marry a Catholic girl, and I very nearly became a convert myself. I used to visit the parish priest for argument sessions, attended Mass every Sunday, bought a rosary, used reams of paper trying to convert Willis, Vinç Clarke and Paul Enever, and made a sincere effort to See The Light. It was an interesting, but not a very enjoyable, experience. I thought it rather like eating tapioca pudding: you know that it may be very very good for you indeed, but that doesn't make it look the least bit better, and all you can do is close your eyes and try to swallow. Well, I couldn't swallow enough, and, frankly, I'm wondering if you'll do any better than I did and if you will be able to make those successive "lcaps into the dark" that have to be negotiated before you can become a Catholic.

Personally I couldn't swallow and I couldn't leap. I was sincere enough, but I could not (and still cannot) see how any adult can dumbly accept someone else's word in the manner prescribed by Cardinal Mercer: "A revealed truth can be believed by a prudent man and ought to be believed." There, in one sentence, is the whole secret of the success of the R.C. Church. In effect the Cardinal is saying "Believe me quick buster or you'll finish in hell" To me any attempt at reasoning as such a basis as this is no more than auto-suggestion. As that other celebrated theologician, Mr W Alexander Willis once said: "you are in a position of a man being told that there is a life size statue of Marilyn Monroe on the other side of the Moon. You are in no position to prove or disprove this statement, -- but it is allowable to point out that it's rather unlikely from the known evidence."

Still, other fapans have been back and forth over this ground with you, and there is no point in me rehashing it again. There were a couple of points in various GEMZINES that I would like to comment upon though.

I thought it odd that you, who left the Presbyterian Church because of their "hate-week" campaigns against the Catholics, haven't been similiarly repelled by Catholic intolerance towards every other sect. When it comes to intolerance the R.C. Church wins hands down every time: there is no salvation outside the Church and inside the flock no dissenting view is allowed at all. The cure for doubt takes only one form: you get down on your knees and beseech Almighty God to forgive you the sin of doubting his Holy Church, and then do penance to cleanse yourself of the sin afterwards. If, tomorrow, His Holiness the Pope declared that the Earth is stationary and the Sun moves around it then every Catholic must believe it again. 400 years ago Galileo had to kneel down and abjure his detestable heresy that the earth moved around the sun. He had to do so, and all those fairy stories about the whispered "Eppur si muove" ("and yet it does move") are just apocryphal garbage. He was, in the end, a Catholic and he did as he was told. Tomorrow, umpteen millions of Catholics would do exactly the same thing again.

"Purgatory threads its way through Judaism." You mean that Jews believe in purgatory too??? As a reference to a belief in purgatory you quote 1 Cor 3: 11-15, but on looking this up it doesn't seem to mean very much at all.....

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble: Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built upon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

The first thing that strikes me about this is that it's a Good Thing that the Blessed St Paul isn't on the FAPA Waiting List. I do not care for his literary style, --it reminds me more than somewhat of that of jolly George Wetzel. The second thing is that it's incredible that this mish-mosh should be seriously put forward as evidence of the existence of purgatory. Anybody who could be persuaded to believe by the use of evidence such as this must be far more credulous than any of the leading lights of the Shaver Cult.

How do Protestants "render homage" to their "unrecognized saints....Knox, Calvin, Whitman, etc."? I know nothing of the Southern Baptists or the Jchovah's Witless, but surely they have nothing on a par with the statues, candles, shrines, veneration of relics and everything that goes to make up the Catholic homage. Surely there are no Protestant sects in which these eminent divines are invoked in a similiar manner -- or anything resembling a similiar manner -- to the way the Catholics call on the aid of Blessed St Anthony of Padua, Blessed St Jude, or the Little Flower, St Theresa. ?

"When any group neglects religious instruction of the young, the society deteriorates." That's a pretty sweeping statement, and the only backing offered is an oblique reference to Russia..... which is demonstrably untrue. The lot of the ordinary Russian, like that of the ordinary policeman, may not be a happy one, but it has, all too obviously improved not deteriorated since religious instruction of the young was abolished and the power of the Russian Orthodox Church broken along with that of the Czar. Anyone who believes otherwise must surely be a victim of the strange mania that has infected Wetzel. ("Let's rush out and hate Mars -- the dirty red planet.") And, of course, most of the European countries reached their peak after the Reformation when they broke with the Church of Rome, didn't they?

Now about rosaries. To my mind, the rosary is too a talisman, and by no stretch of the imagination can it be referred to as a tool. To both the laity and the Catholic heirarchy it's a sacred thing, -- a one-way telephone to the Virgin Mary with supernatural powers of its own. Like all talismans these powers vary in value: prayers chanted over a rosary blessed by one religious order will earn the supplicant a form of Holy Interest called an Indulgence, whilst the same prayer, by the same supplicant, but on a different rosary will not merit the Indulgence. Frankly, this is on a par with a Joan the Wad charm that has, or has not, been dipped in the water of the Lucky Wishing Well. The counting device is endowed with mystic properties, and is no more a tool than a scapular is a chest protector.

I rather care for the idea of bashful fapans obtaining a rosary from you under cover of a plain sealed envelope though, and it shows a good insight into human nature. When I bought my one I sneaked into Westminster Cathedral just before it closed for the night and bought it from a nun who ran a little shop just inside the porch. I was so embarrassed that I didn't even wait for my sixpence change.

HELEN'S FANTASIA  
(Helen Wesson)

My ghod, do you mean that "My old man said follow the van  
don't dilly-dally on the way," was previously unknown to you?

In England it has damn near reached the status of a "folk-song," and I have known the words for as far back as I can remember. It was first popularised by Marie Lloyd, the Edwardian darling of the English music-hall about 50 years ago and since then has been a Cockney anthem along with "Knees Up, Mother Brown," Nellie Dean" and "Any Old Iron." In my own family, -- Cockney on both sides and a bit snobbish about it, -- we never have a party without these being pounded out on the old piano whilst the congregation hollers the words and does the actions that go with them. In almost any East End pub on a Friday or a Saturday night you're certain to hear them at least once before chucking-out time, and I can no more imagine a family party without them than I could without the minimum 10 quarts of brown ale in the corner and the plate heaped with Aunt Flossie's sausage rolls on the sideboard. Anyway, here's the rest of your interlineation. The "van" is a horse-drawn van, -- the singer is moving from one house to another. A "half-quartern" is a spirits measure that is approximately equal to four tots.

My old man said "Follow the van, -- don't dilly-dally on the way."  
O'f went the van with me 'ome packed in it,  
I walks behind with me old cock-linnet.  
I dillies, I dallies, I dallies and I dillies,  
I lost me way and don't know where to roam.  
I stopped on the way to 'ave the old half-quartern  
AND I CAN'T FIND MY WAY HOME.

I can't give you the music, alas.....but surely there's at least one Londoner in Yokohama. You won't need more than one either, and he'll probably be able to teach you the little dance that goes with it.....a little jig backwards and forwards with one hand extended (you're carrying a linnet in a cage) and the other above your eyes as you search the horizon for the missing panttechnicon.

My own party-piece (truly) is another one of those I mentioned, -- ANY OLD IRON. I doubt if anyone gives a faint damn, but Redd Boggs once got away with skip-rope rhymes and.....here.

Any old iron, any old iron,  
Any any any old iron?  
You look sweet, talk about a treat,  
You look a dandy from your napper to your feet.  
Dressed in style, a brand new tile,  
Yer farver's old green tie on.  
I wouldn't give yer tuppence for your old watch chain,  
Old iron, OLD IRON.

There must be a couple of dozen of these old music-hall songs which are as much the essence of London as the sound of its church bells. Incidentally, is that nursery jingle based on the bells known abroad too? "Oranges and Lemons," said the bells of St. Clemens. "You owe me five farthings," said the bells of St Martins. "When will you pay me?" said the bells of Old Bailey. "When I grow rich," said the bells of Shoreditch. "When will that be?" said the bells of Stepney.

"I do not know," said the big bell of Bow.

What was that you were saying about the "staid, reserved British," hmm?