

B.R.O.W.S.I.N.G.

Wholenumber seven
'Wonderful indeed!'

Personal postwar aim: the proper housing, cataloguing and arrangement of my book collection one day

LONDON Yes, your scribe paid a long-awaited visit to the great metropolis a matter of three weeks ago from when I am writing this, probably three months ago by the time Japanese read it. The august pages of FIL did contain a brief account of the highlights of the trip, but just to amuse myself, here goes for a few details of the bookish side of things. Of course my main feeling whilst in London, is extreme envy of the wonderful collection George Medhurst, premier British Bibliophile, has got together, and even more for their wonderful condition and the grand bookcases they are housed in. George has somewhere over 700 science fiction books listed, but he doesn't bother so much with other forms of fantasy, of which he also has several hundred volumes, and so could not give a definite sum total. And his knowledge of book scientific fantasy is encyclopedic, making it one of my deep regrets that he does not often pass on the many interesting facets and notes on our literature that he could do so ably. Alas, his time seems to be even worse taken up than mine.

So I went bookhunting, once by myself, once with Norman 'Gus' Willmorth of Los Angeles, and once with Messrs Fred Brown (wartime policeman and bibliophile) Syd Bounds and Arthur Williams. I did best on my own but the number of books available in London nowadays is very disappointing and their prices even more so. There is actually a shop in London where they issue a list of "forecasts and Utopias" but their prices are terrific. This is understandable when you consider the tracking down they do and specialised service given, but surely it is more fun for the enthusiast to do his own searching. In the course of a talk with the proprietor it turned out that he was an old "Amazing" fan but hadn't seen one of the Yank magazines for years and years. I did buy two books there "The Provinces" by Louis Tracy (Pearson 1898) a sequel to "An American" and "The Rev Annabel Lee" by Robert Buchanan (also Pearson 1898) - a kind of Tomorrow. Both unread so far. There were about another half dozen I didn't possess there, but their prices were too stiff for me. At more plebeian places the haul included Arthur Machen's "The Terror"; "The God of the evening" by Horace Horsnell, apparently dealing with the time of the creation and Adam; "The Vizier of the Two-Horned Alexander" Frank R. Stockton, an intriguing title, wonder what the story is about; "Medusa" by Visiak, again unread so far; "Moonshine" Richard Whiteing, ditto; "War in Heaven" Charles Williams, which I understand is concerned with the Holy Graal; Anstey's "The Brass Bottle"; "A Message from the Gods" by Melchior Machride, a play situate in ancient Atlantis; "A Magic Walking Stick" John Buchan, apparently a juvenile; "The Great Pacific War" by K. C. Bywater, a tale of hostilities betwixt Japan and USA, but written some years ago; Lord Dunsany's "Chronicles of Rodriguez"; "Brother Petroc's Return" by SMC wherein a mediaeval monk pops back into the faithless world of today; "The Riddle of the Sands" by Erskine Childers, nothing known; "Flash Gordon in the Caverns of Mongo" Alex Raymond, US edition found in the Red Cross Bookshop in Wigmore St, and which Fred Brown is still trying hard to part me from, for his 12 year old daughter; "A Recipe for Diamonds" C.J. Cutcliffe-Hyne; and "unrest of their Time" Nellie Kirkeham, which is printed in two different colours for past & present lives.

Its now about ten days since I typed the foregoing page, and I'm pleased to say that by now I've read nearly half of the books mentioned. But as I've already stenciled and duplicated two pages of book reviews we'd better leave my versions of these works till next issue.

Moment that will live for ever in my memory; when a bookseller turned to his stenographer and asked "Have we Mr Rosenblum's address?" to be immediately given the answer - "Oh yes, the British Fantasy Society". 'Twas worth coming to London to hear that!

So now I can look forward to my next trip, please Ghu in less than 4 years this time.

Sister Susie's sewing shirts for soldiers, soft silk shirts that sister Susie

JUST A FEW WANTS... in the book line of course.

George Rafflesovitch "Planetary Journeys and Earthly Sketches"; C. Dixor "1500 Miles an Hour"; Hermes (Benjamin Lumley) "Another World"; Hugh MacCall "Mr Strangers Sealed Packet"; John Mastin "The Stolen Planet" Norman Greenwood "Zarlah the Martian"; Robert Alexander "The Pendulum of Fate" Henry Doding "The Man from Marx"; Leslie Beresford "The Venus Girl"; Charles Harrar "Thruka of the Moon"; Isabel Griffiths "Three Worlds"; Carl H Claudy "A 1000 Years a minute" & "The Blue Grotto Terror"; et autres....

Phyllis feels fearless Phyllis feels fierce Phyllis feels fearless Phyllis

ANCIENT SCIENCEFICTION and not 1928 or so Amazins....

That noble erudite and deeply profound branch of literature has behind it a history of considerable breadth and extent, of which all too many of its devotees are woefully ignorant. Having just had a brief discussion with Flying Officer Allan Miles on the subject I feel this is a good opportunity to bring to the notice of the select circle revering this publication a few surviving examples of somewhat older scientific fantasy than usually swims within their ken. For example, in 1629 Bishop Francis Godwin wrote "The Man in the Moon" of which a single copy of the first and second editions rests in the British Museum. But in 1937 Smith College of Northampton, Mass, USA edited and reprinted the opus in their Studies in Modern Languages, and it became available to the public at the cost of 75 cents. Another moon trip fairly recently reprinted is "A Narrative of the Life and Astonishing Adventures of John "aniel" Taken from his own mouth by Ralph Morris. This originally appeared in 1751, but in 1925 was reprinted as volume 1 of "The Library of Impostors" published by Robert Holden of London at 25/- in an edition limited to 750 copies - mine is numbered 14. Later a cheaper (slightly) edit was run off and is still available. John is wrecked on an island with a vol companion, discovers said companion to be female, settles the island and raises a family, one son invents a flying machine, they try it out and reach the moon unwittingly, returning fall into the home of a man-fish mutation, try again and finally reach civilisation. With the same sort of atmosphere and published in the same year is "The Life and Adventures of Peter Wilkins by Robert Paltock, and this is a book no bibliophile fan should be without. You'll find it easily enough - in the Everyman Library series, available on both sides of the Atlantic. Peter also gets wrecked but he is by himself. He hears strange noises sometimes in the sylvan glade on his island wherein he has taken his abode, and later finds a peculiar variety of female human the She is of of a race of "Flying Indians" who have developed their own civilisation which Peter "modernises". And then of course there is the well-known Cyrano de Bergerac - "Voyages to the Sun and Moon" translated by Richard Aldington in the Broadway Translations series is my copy. Tie put out here Routledge and also in USA by Dutton I believe. This first appeared in 1657, and is still going strong. So nerts to Hugo Gernsback. And don't quote Laci of Samosata at me, I already know of his works. TTFN.

M O R E B O O K S and what they are about

When reading quite a number of books recently, and in pursuance of the usual policy, will inflict details thereof upon you, so that such people who bibliographise, or merely list fantasy books can extract data, and to inform others of new additions to my collection.

"A Strange Land" by Felix Ryark (Hutchinson 1908) pp 316.

a rather Unknowish type of story wherein the hero cleaves his way thru a rock barrier by means of music, to enter another realm of world wherein decay is unknown, humans are the only animal inhabitants "dying" in a swirl of light and burst of supreme music to leave no trace, and living in Utopian Anarchistic family groups. Maybe allegory, maybe Utopia but good.

"Pharaoh's Broker: being the very remarkable experiences in another world of Isidor Werner" by Ellsworth Douglas (Pearson 1899 pp 316)

About half the book is taken up by a description of a voyage from Earth to Mars in a anti-gravity propelled spaceship. On Mars we find a parallel civilisation to ours but at an immensely earlier stage. In fact at the Pharaoh and Joseph episode; even to the speaking of Hebrew. Remarkable indeed. Interesting

"Hells Bells: A Comedy of the Underworld" by Marmaduke Lixey (Faber and Faber 1936 pp 304) Life between two incarnations with the accent on pseudo Rabelaisian comedy and some remarkable conceptions of a big-business Hell which makes an interesting satire on present economic trends. Not bad at all

"The Aerodrome: a love story" by Rex Warner (John Lane 1941) Rex Warners stories are set in some mystical land, and in this land we witness the build up of an "air force" dedicated to an austere and efficient control of mankind, ignoring emotions completely. Through the intricacies of an extremely unlikely plot we see how the idea failed. Obscure allegory praps.

"Winged Pharaoh" by Joan Grant (Barker 1937). Primarily a well-written and interesting tale of early Egypt, but one in which the occult ideas of the period are natural laws whose operation is confined to initiates. With a theory of divine purpose as seen by many mystics and capable of application to present incarnations as well. Recommended to occult fantasistes.

"The Green Child: A Romance" by Herbert Read (Heinemann 1935 pp 256). Most of the book is taken up with reminiscences of how the narrator set up a modified ideal state in a very minor South American republic; but it then goes on to how he penetrated to an underworld civilisation wherein a mutation of humanity lives a most peculiar life in well-defined cycles and mainly devoted to the contemplation of sounds. Perplexing.

"The Prophet" by P.P. Sheehan (T. Fisher Unwin 1913 6/- pp312). How a revivalist preacher in the backwoods of USA develops miracle working and healing, sets up an ideal community (on Salvation Army lines) and is finally killed during labour "troubles" when attempting to negotiate. And good too

"The Lavender Dragon" by Eden Phillpotts (Grant Richards 1913 pp200). Ah, this one's a lovely one. Of a beneficent Dragon who kidnaps the unwanted from mediaeval civilisation to set up an Utopia under his benevolent despotism. One discovers many skits, and much idealism. Recommended.

"The King of Elflands' Daughter" by Lord Dunsany (Putnam 1924 pp 301). Now how can one describe a Dunsany book? Set in the aerie world of make-believe where faerie land borders the fields we know, of intervisits and a love between the two worlds, with bizarre conceptions galore. To be sipped slowly

"Zero to Eighty: Being my lifetime doings, relations, and inventions also my journey round the Moon" by Akkad Pseudoman (E.P. Northrup) (Scientific Publishing Company 1937). Seriously written to prove that interplanetary voyaging is a definite possibility, and backed by a technical supplement and much experimentation, this is a classic for the would-be astronaut and the connoisseur of serious imaginative writing. Reads quite like the recent cent biography penned in AD 2000 which it purperts to be. A Must.

more books read than last few weeks....

Small Fables (1943) The "Amazing Adventures of the Flying Yorkshireman" by Eric Knight (Collins 1943) a selection of superb short stories about which I echo the approbation of such fantasy bibliophiles as Langley Seades. One or two minor points occur where I differ in the interpretation of the Yorkshire idiom, which may be explained by the difference in time in our knowledge of it; and I sincerely hope that other readers realise the whole evaluation is in the nature of a kindly caricature rather than true life.

The Experiment of Doctor Nevill: A Novel by Emeric Hulme-Beaman (John Long 1906) pp317. Attempt to restore to health an injured nobleman by grafting portion of the brain of a newly-executed criminal in place of his injured tissues leads to a transference of personality, only remedied by undoing the experiment. Not at all as bad as it might have been.

The Baling Miracle; A Realistic Story (Liar!) by Horace W. C. Newke, (Hills and Sons 1921 pp414) Another exchange of personality theme, but this time religious in origin. A most mixed up moral lesson which has gone wrong all over the place - an astonished either the writer or publisher stood for it. Stuck up surly-bushen housewife v. sympathetic nurse who lives in sin, and the housewife is the good one, her opponent being apparently beneath contempt, and duly punished by the Almighty. Rotten to the core.

The Crystal and the Sphinx; A Romance of Crystal-Gazing in Egypt by Douglas Eidan (Stanley Paul, also pub. in USA). The subtitle is a bad description, - the crystal is the key to the discovery of a hidden tomb in Egypt wherein is contained the secret that made Egypt great. And that is none other than atomic energy (solves the problem of how the pyramids were built) which is rediscovered and used for power in various ways. Murky but not too bad.

Dr Mabuse: Master of Mystery: A Novel by Norbert Jacques, trans by Lilian A. Clare (Allen and Unwin 1928 pp324). You ought to know Dr Mabuse from his film appearances, "Testament of Dr M" being, I think the last film to be made in pre-Nazi Germany, and smuggled out under the floorboards of a car. Anyway Dr M. is a super-criminal, with wonderful organisational powers, super-diagnoses and a mastery of hypnotism which he uses to work his wicked will. He seems to be beaten more by good luck than good management, but unfortunately this type of yarn suffers severely in translation.

Miss Lucifer by Ronald Fraser (Jonathan Cape 1939 pp316). A good book in every way I have no hesitation in recommending this to anyone who can appreciate other than adventure type of fantasy. Lucifer means Light-bringer in this context and we have the life of a woman whose birth did not obscure her knowledge of the nether world. How she reacts and the philosophy she gradually adopts. Not newfangledly occult but seriously mystic if you sense the distinction.

Orlando: A Biography by Virginia Woolf (Hogarth Press 1928). This even eclipses the last but I shall have to read it again to obtain anything like a serious understanding of its purport and purpose. It is, however the tale of a being who lives from Elizabethan times until today, changing sex in between, and intimately involved with many of the great figures of the past.

War in Heaven by Charles Williams (Victor Gollancz 1930 pp288) Can't say I liked it. Tale of a murder, discovery of the holy Grail in an English Village church, a world-wy black magician, and several well meaning characters who, backed up by "Theater John" the mystical guardian of the Grail succeed in foiling the powers of darkness. Neither 'tec nor occult.

Alf's New Button by W. A. Darlington (Herbert Jenkins 1940 pp 284) Down to the usual low Jenkins standard, a potboiler of Alf Higgins in this war, 1960 vintage, with his private genie just suitable for morons who can read two syllable words. In fact recommended for such. Steer clear, if not.

Cissy saw six thick thisle sticks. Cissy saw six thick thisle sticks.

PROBLEM
CORNER

Remember that nasty problem Harry Warner had, of his migraine headaches? Well; I've got one to propound too -- why can't I wear a watch and what can I do about it? Its a fact, almost any watch I attempt to carry with me goes completely haywire, gaining and losing time indiscriminately at ridiculous rates. Take the watch I've used these last two weeks, my father has used it, off and on, for some twenty years without any trouble. I use it for three days and the trouble starts. One night it gained an hour and a quarter overnight, the next day it lost fifty minutes during the afternoon. And I don't like it; now if it were the other way round perhaps... But seriously, wristwatches are no use whatsoever, they give up the ghost completely within a day. I have had two pocketwatches which went on me, the one a cheap affair that lasted thru my school days, after which the next that tolerated me was a 17 jewel gold Waltham watch. Unfortunately this latter is no longer available. Possibly the reason is connected with the fact that I appear to possess a somewhat peculiar heart which, although perfectly healthy, is apt to vary its rate considerably as a result of which two separate GPs have insisted on my visiting a heart specialist. I also am double-jointed in the top joints of thumbs and fingers. Probably Slannish mutations.

Seven slimy serpents slowly slithering southwards

SLANS AND
ALL THAT

Which brings up another subject upon which I'd like to have my little say. And that is as to whether fans (fen?) are slans (slen?). Upon which moot point I am inclined to come down on the side of the affirmative. Understanding, however, in this attitude that slans does not mean the full-blooded Van Vogt variety; but merely a difference from the norm.

Of course change is constantly occurring and every human being must include several differences from "normal" and possibly minor mutations of differing types. From my double-jointedness to a genius at mathematics for example. But there does seem to be a more advanced kind of human in the process of emerging - quite a number of authorities bear witness to this. And it seems to me that the majority of fans belong to this; not all for there are always sensation-seekers and hangers on attached to any sort of organisation. Nor, and I am most definite in this, is this more evolved type of humanity confined to fans; if you watch out for them you'll find the fannish type of outlook in the most surprising places. That is, agreeing with the Ashley definition of the special characteristics of fans - breadth of ideas, time-spanning capacity and feeling of brotherhood with like-minded creatures. What seems to have happened is that a number of such people have, in one way or another, been attracted to fantasy fiction as a mode of expression, before they became involved in any other major activity necessitating a similar amount of occupation. Thus we are but one facet of a larger movement, and it sometimes seems to me, possibly the only portion which makes an attempt to see where we are going. As such fandom CAN fulfil quite an important niche in the progress of mankind, as trail-blazers and avatars; but which we probably won't. It may be a question of awaiting the psychological moment perhaps, but I would advocate the permeation of all progressive organisations and genuine reform societies as both individually satisfying and a method of making our (in the larger sense) influence felt upon the world at large. There may be several, shall we say germs, of cosmic (I use that word seriously) conception struggling to gain an influence on mankind, maybe we are one of them. And if we are 'tis no reason to become swell-headed, but rather an opportunity for serious recognition of how great a responsibility may lie on our shoulders; as some of the few who know where we want to go.

The dumb drummer thumps the drum with his thumbs. the dumb drummer thumps

A couple of issues ago, a list of such stories compiled by John F. Burke was included in Browsersings. Now W. Robert Gibson has sent in a further list, for which we are most grateful to him.

<u>Author</u>	<u>Book</u>	<u>Details</u>
Leifran Atkey;	Heracles, Sportsman	Fantasy, humor, particularly "Co en Apples" interlude
H. Britten Austin;	Tomorrow	one or two shorts are future
Various Authors;	Eleven Possible Cases	World's End fantasy by Kym Olin
" "	; Forecasts of the Coming Century	- non-fiction one by G. B. Shaw.
Jules Castier;	Rather like.	Parodies on famous writers incl some fantasies
Leslie Charteris;	The Last Here	First chapter is stf short
" " "	Once More the "aint	The Gold Standards.
Serald ...are Cornish;	Beneath the surface	Title story is fantasy
Richard Dehan;	Off andy "ook	Lady Clanbevans "aby - stf
A. Conan Doyle	Danger	Danger - future when written
" "	The Last Galley	the "irror of the heights - stf
Lord Dunsany's three "Jorkens" books contain		a scatter of stf and fantasy
W. E. Scott	A Trip to Paradoxia	Title item satiric Utopia
A. Forster	The Eternal Moment	The Machine Stops - stf
H. S. Haldane	Possible Worlds	The Last Judgements
H. Hinton	Scientific Romances 2nd Series	Stella - stf
Stanley Horler	Man Who Shook the Earth	Title story stf
John Huxley	Essays of a Biologist	The Philosophical ants - stf
H. S. Cutcliffe Hyne	The Rev Cpt Kettle	Ice Age Woman - stf
" " "	Red Herrings	Several shorts
" " "	Man's Understanding	about five stf and fantasy tales
Robert Kipling	- Bob Gibson lists seven collections of short stories.	
Washington Irving	D. Knickerbockers History of New York. Contains parable of earth invaded and conquered by Lunarians.	
H. G. Wells	Prose Fancies, second series	
Jack London	Moon Face	The Shadow and the Flash stf.
	When God Laughs	one or two shorts
	The Strength of the Strong	in each
Harry Lowerison	From Paleolith to motor car.	3 shorts are pre-historic
Bert Kennedy	The Voice in the Light	Far future and pre-historic
R. R. Macpherson	The Phantom sweetheart	Tale of a dinosaur in a lake
Gilbert Norwood	The Wooden Man	A Distant Witness - stf
Sax Rohmer	Mystery of Fu Manchu	1 chapter - The Fungus Waller
Frank R Stockton	The Christmas Wreck	Tale of "egative Gravity
Ernest R Suffling	The Story Hunter	1 short - man extracts Egyptian thoughts from mummy's skull by electrical means
H. R. Wakefield	Imagine 3 man in a box	Title story
Barry Pain	The New Gulliver	Title story - satiric Utopia

Dig deep ditches dick dig deep ditches dick dig deep ditches dick dig deep

A bookseller acquaintance of mine showed me recently a copy of what must be quite a rare work. By Claude Loughton, it is called simply "Three Fantastic Tales" and its imprint is that of The Chiswick Press, 40 First Ave, London E 17. There were 275 copies printed of which 250 were for sale and all are signed by the author. Dated 1934, I am unaware of the published price but this copy cost one guinea precisely. Of course it was a lovely edition but I had to leave it there. Of the stories the first "The Petrified World" is based on the same theme as Wells "The New Accelerator", and the second deals with the actual existence of an ideal woman previously created on paper.