



DAWN SHADOWS

A 'MIRACABRE' PUBLICATION - EDITED BY RATHBONE

+ HILARY
ST CLARE

This, if I may say so, is a very belated "shadow" - in fact almost a shadow of a shadow in an indefinite time and space. Still it is something. American fans please note.

SAM YOUNG: If I had you now I'd do something unethical to you. Do you think you can thwart me with a measly bulletin? I/we want a letter - enda.....

Personal News: I'm doing this on leave in Edinburgh. The transears are ringing, the scent of petrol is sweet on the air, and my camouflaged groundsheet cape looks like being used - what beautiful weather.....I floated into a bookshop the other day and extracted, on threat of summons libel, and other forms of larceny, a fantasy called "The Witch of Prague". This may be sneered at by old soaks -i.e.: hardened fans - but for myself it seems to me no mean achievement. ADVERTISEMENT Anyone got copies of translations of ancient Greek poetry and/or any books on Sappho to spare? Of course I take it for granted that fans have never heard of Sappho and what sort of SF does she write anyway. But I refer to the Greek poetess and just ask on the offchance.

Osmond Robbins off to Dunnotn for a holiday, meanwhile, and I guess we all hope he enjoys it. Part of the time I saw him yesterday he was perusing the "Daily Worker" - oh, Osmond..... We waxed indignant together over the banning of technocracy in Canada. I always had an idea colonials were less narrow-minded myself. Seems I was wrong.

I don't read the news much myself, and was appropriately surprised 1) at the death of Sir Oliver Lodge & 2) at the death of Trotsky. I just knew yesterday - why didn't someone tell me? Urrn - is Cleopatra dead yet, and who is this guy Mussolini anyway?

Dear Hitler, Adolf,

Are you going to ban SF in this country if you get here?

Rathbone, James.

Dear Rathbone, James,

I will defend SF to the greatest of my ability. It keeps the populace feeble-minded,

Hitler, Adolf.

Hitler, Adolf,

What was that you said?

Rathbone (Pte)

Rathbone, sup.)

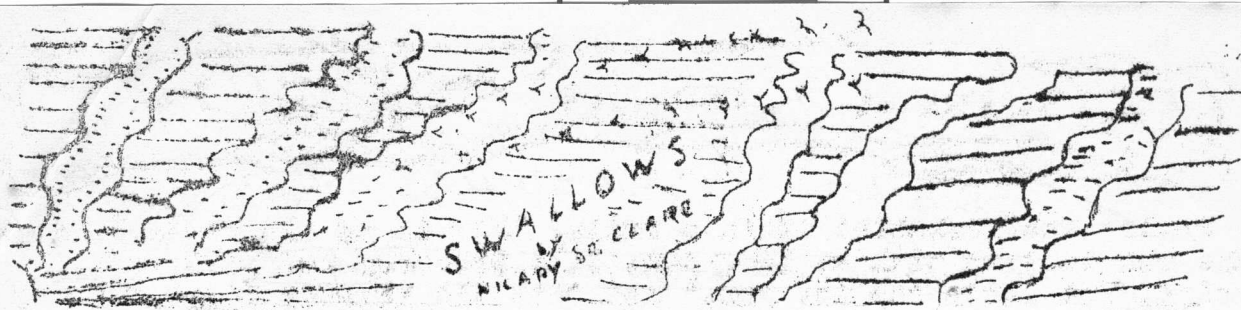
I said it is o.k. with me. See you next blitzkrieg
Adolf.

Dear Adolf,

I have a warm (hot) place for you.

James.

(This correspondence must now cease - Ed.)



About August the birds began to fly South. Mr. Potts dropped the brovel he held in his hand and sighed. His rheumatism would soon begin to set in. As a gardener he was a failure; as a man he was a physical wreck with plenty of money. Of course, Greenacres stretched from the river to the beginning of Morsham. He ought to be proud of that. He had worked hard for it. But he was no good at gardening; no good at walking - at any form of physical exercise at all. He thought "Damn," and crept into the house through the open french windows. He felt old and done and past his days.

His daughter met him at tea. "Pa" she said, "what you want is a good rest. Why don't you take a holiday - South - the Riviera - no - that's no good now - but I mean - somewhere warm and sunny - get the old rist out of your bones....You can afford it, you old riser - why not ? "

He looked at her. "In that pretty head of yours never comes the thought that I like here. I was born in Morsham. I'll stick to it. And where would you and Jinny be if I left you? Bombed and gassed and suffocated. Get away with you Laud - you know Jinny likes here - and thrives here too. By the way, where is Jinny ? "

Laud answered - "Oh, she's playing in the front garden - I'll get her now." She lingered for a moment before she went for her daughter, the afternoon sun shining on her auburn hair, "but I wish you would."

Potts settled down to tea, and a few minutes later Jinny came into the room. "daddy's away with an old witchy woman." she announced solemnly. Laud's pensive look gave way to laughter.

"The old lady with the apples, Jinny, dear?"

"Yes, he says he will be back in a minute"

"Would that be Peg Merrilees ?" inquired Potts

"Yes - I think so) Jinny wouldn't know, father" said Laud.

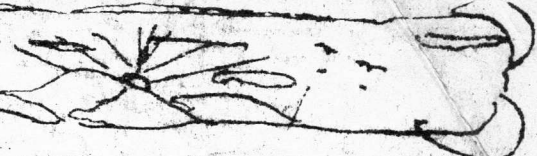
"She is a real witch, isn't she? does mysterious things with cows and sick children ?"

"Well, I would say so. She's cured many a sore of mine. There's no harm in Peg - though she's queer and solemn. What could Paul be wanting with her, though. I wonder ?"

Paul unexpectedly answered the question himself by sitting suddenly on a vacant chair at the table and helping himself to the salad. "I've seen old Peg" he smiled, "and I got a present from her." He held out his hand over the table, which was seen to contain a little cut pebble about the size of his finger-nail. "It's fey" he said, mysteriously. "It grants you one wish."

Jinny gasped with delight, "Ooh - I want a bicycle, and a doll, and - -"

"Stop, stop," laughed Paul, "It only grants you one wish, and it isn't yours, anyway. Its your grandfathers. Peg gave it to me for him."

The Swallows - continued 

Potts' face wrinkled up in a smile. "Peg is an old fraud," he said "she was in love with me long ago. It's probably had luck - a hoodoo. But let's see it, son." And soon the trinket found the way into his waistcoat pocket, and he was reaching for his hat to have another "go" at the garden.

The evening was cool and soft, as evenings are at Morshan. The sea breezes drive away the mist for a time and the lawns and gardens, the old castle itself, bask in weak sunlight. Potts stopped his gardening to wander to his favourite spot - a sort of arbor he had made on the hill overlooking the town. He stared down at the old harbours with a touch of awe in him. So old they were, so distant and vague with age. The Phoenicians had been here, and what before. They came from the South, those previous travellers from fabulous lands, in their ships of wood, and had folded their silk sails here forever. So the legend said - that they sailed again on certain nights - those travellers from the South lands ... South.

The old longing was on him again, for blue lagoons and little white ships with spread canvas like wings. He would go to the vistas of the world, and pay there his tribute in gold or silver if they would only let him go - or - if he would let himself go... South. No - it would be running away.

Suddenly he caught sight of a swallow and cried aloud. If he could only go with that.

He was wheeling and diving above the earth. He was poised over Morshan. He went. The shock brought him back to consciousness. The sun must have been hot on his neck. A fellow must take care of himself. Better go home. But again the places of legend had called. They would not let him away this time. Potts was doomed - or blessed.

The dream haunted him when he slept that night.

It seemed he had to get around in a miraculously small body. The grass was huge, the trees monstrous, and the old town inconceivable. Death was nearer - you had to look out for hawks or bats or small boys. But the beauty of circling in the sunlight. The lowliness of diving to a hidden food through white smudges of fluffy cloud. What patterns to trace in the blue sky when one was fleet of wing, alone and undaunted. Inevolution.

He glanced at the sky, waiting on friends. It was not yet time to go South.

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The "old man" awoke that morning, refreshed and rejuvenated in mind. Everybody began to say he looked better. With the dream recurring every night during the next week, Potts acquired a peculiar poise. He felt more in control of himself. It was as if - as if he had got a new set of lines. Most peculiar that - as if he had --- wings.

Above the house one evening came the swallows, darting up and down in the sky, piercing the grey clouds with intricate, ecstatic patterns, weaving the sunlight when it came with a sort, shadowy glory of painted wings. At night, Potts went up to join his friends. It was time to go, to say farewell. Then -- South it would be, and the cities of myth and legend, the bays of pure lapis lazuli,



# The Swallows (Concluded)

He had a relapse. That was the only way Nature could manage it. When a fellow doesn't want to stay in a particular body and has the power to get another - he can have it and welcome. But he can't have both. So, of course old Potts died.

It was peculiar. With the rays of the sun on his face, Potts died, looking away from them --- South. In his hand was the stone - Peg's charm. But she was there, too, and took it back. She kissed him -- once. There were tears in her eyes, she hadn't cried - not 'on a hunder' - as she put it.

From the lawn came the voice of Jimmy, filled with longing and regret. "Oh, hurry, the swallows, the swallows."

THE END  
OoOoOoOoOoOoOoOoOoOo

Tell us what you think of this story. Would you like more by HILARY ST. CLARE? We asked her what she thought of this herself, and she replied "The idea's all right, but the spelling and grammar is bad. I didn't take much care with it."

Would you like a story with a lot of time taken over it. Would it be worth our while? Let's know.

We will try and publish regularly, and miss out the comic (?) papers, if you like. Only be merciful to us, etc.

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