

EYE TRACKS



No 2

E Y E T R A C K S Number 2, Summer 1960. Produced and misdirected for the September 1960 mailing of OMPA, and other interested

Cover by TED FORSYTH.

parties, by George Locke, whose home address, 85 CHELSEA GARDENS, CHELSEA BRIDGE ROAD, LONDON, S.W.1., is, at least, permanent. My army address, which should be permanent, as they're 1) understaffed, 2) reluctant to post men from this hospital, is: 23787189 Pte. Locke G W, 3 Company, R.A.M.C, Connaught Hospital, Bramshott, HINDHEAD, Surrey. Er, England. This may change, though I hope, that as it's only forty miles from London and sitting happily astride the A3, it will stick. If anything changes, let it be that Pte. bit.

"NAMES CHANGED TO PROTECT THE GUILTY" DEPARTMENT. I've had two or three different ideas concerning my army life so far to write about, and I've been beating my brains recently trying to figure out how I can work them into a single narrative without bringing too much invented material. There were, basically, three incidents, each of which should be dealt with separately, yet each of which came to a head the same evening, in the same place, and concerning the same people.

Maybe this arrangement will work, maybe it won't. Here goes, anyway.

"Protect the Guilty". There was a very popular film out a few years ago called "Private's Progress". It proved a great success, and our American friends went overboard for it in the same way as we did. The portrayal of a tough British sergeant by William Hartnell was particularly captivating, and, naturally, I somewhat dreaded the prospect of meeting the original. However, the Royal Army Medical Corps Depot and Training Establishment at Crookham does not comply too closely with that particular aspect of army life as portrayed by Private's Progress. The instructors, most of them, are National Servicemen, the same as the recruits. Regulars, in fact, are frowned upon in this Corps, and if anyone is so 'thick' as to sign on, he's in for a less pleasant time than the others. The fact that you have to be thick to sign on, and therefore not so likely to be perfect with your drill first time than the others doesn't help them, either.

However, although William Hartnell was not present to any great extent at Crookham, there was ample evidence that the rest of the film had its basis in fact. I'm talking about the fiddles, if the title of this story didn't suggest it.

Take, for instance, food. This is a commodity at the same time in high demand and maligned. Everybody grumbled about the food at Crookham - I'll merely say that while frequently it was cold, and there were always queues half a mile long for it, it was generally excellent food, with an extensive choice. One day, some of us were lying on our beds in the barrack-room - about seven in the evening it was - when several of the lads and the Corporal, who had been out of camp running, come in and summoned us together. The windows were shut; those which had bolts were bolted. Somebody was stationed by the door. Somebody else blocked the mice-holes with potty, and every bed was searched in case there were spies underneath.

Everybody was then asked to swear an oath saying he would not breathe a word of what was to follow - and told that if he did breathe a word, he would breathe no more.

"Seriously, boys, if any of this gets out, certain people will get into very

serious trouble. For that reason, none of you are to ask us where we are getting the food - and we won't say, if you do. We have the chance of getting a certain amount of, and we want to know if you're all keen on the idea."

Needless to say, everybody was keen on the idea, and nobody inquired after the source. The next day, everything was all set. A carton of various varieties of food mysteriously appeared in the barrack room. Everybody had smuggled some bread out of the dining room under their shirts - those that didn't appear to have the figure of Marilyn Monroe were deemed to be pregnant - and somebody else had scrounged some butter. Somebody was stationed outside the door to divert any chance visitors, and everybody set to opening cans, brewing tea over an illegal electric fire, and digging out their mess tins from mothballs - the wretched things are never used.

When I was watchdog, I was shaking the studs out of my boots in case the RPs should choose this evening for one of their occasional tours of the camp. There was also the possibility of the CSM coming round to say hullo. There were several of the lads from other squads liable to pop round - and we wanted to keep The Secret strictly parochial. And, of course, there was the Unexpected...

Naturally, it was the unexpected which came. I'd not had any trouble with other lads showing up - for all intents and purposes, we didn't exist that night. The RP's were watching television somewhere. The CSM had gone chasing butterflies, and the whole camp was quiet. There was probably a good film on at the cinema which accounted for it.

I heard somebody walking along the corridor. His step was brisk, almost eager. Sneaking an eye round a corner - how I wished they were on stalks - I saw a soldier with a peaked cap approaching. Officer, I thought. Snap inspection or something, though that line of reasoning wasn't very valid, as we had none of that nonsense. I gave the Official Secret Knock on the barrack-room door, and approached the officer with some ideas of delaying him so that the lads would have time to clear the evidence away. The officer, as he approached, turned out to be not an officer, but a gentleman who liked to rig himself up in a semblance of a uniform, and who was employed to visit the billets every now and again to enlighten the poor soldiers and give them a dose of religion.

"Excuse me, sir," I said, wondering what in hell to say.

He smiled. "Yes." It was soft and unctuous. I decided to act very shy - and to add a touch of penitence. I decided it would be best to act as though I'd sinned deeply, and wanted to confess my sins...

"I'm afraid I need comforting, sir," I started off by saying.

"Indeed, son. And what is troubling you?"

"My conscience. I can no longer live with it, sir. I am going out of my mind."

"Dear, dear," he soothed. "This is very terrible. Can I help you, pray?"

"I'm afraid - I must get it off my chest, sir!" (My acting that moment was of the hammiest. I buried my face in his tunic, weeping bitterly, and making sure the sound track was well tuned.) "Sir - I have harboured evil thoughts against my fellow men. I have wished bad luck unspeakable upon them. I have consigned them to the depths of hell."

He looked at me, sorrowfully. Patted the top of my beret. "Can you be more explicit, please?"

"On parade, I have wished that our drill instructor would trip up over one of his smart about turns and break his neck. I have wished that the drill sergeant would fracture his vocal chords. And when I was recipient of a dressing down, all the time I was saying, 'yes, sergeant' I was secretly consigning him to hell. and

there was more, sir. Lets more." I decided that the lads had had long enough, now. "I'm not too good at praying, and feel that a poor, insignificant private, worn to a shadow of himself by drill and PT, could not muster the strength for an effective prayer. Could you please pray for my soul, and pray that such thoughts will never occur to me again."

"A discharge would be your best way out," he smiled, proving, I guess, that he had a sense of humour. He went into our billet, and I followed him. Apart from a faint smell of burnt toast, everything was peaceful and serene. Apparently, though, our religious friend's nostrils were from the same source as his dog-collar, for he asked:

"May I have a cup of coffee, boys?"

Another time, things were even more tricky. Two or three of the lads were carrying a box of contraband food across the camp, at about eight in the evening. One of the corporals, known usually as Taff, and on the drill square as That So-and-So, stopped them.

"And where do you think you're going, bach?"

The lads said nothing. They couldn't, without incriminating themselves.

"And what's that in the box, indeed to goodness?"

"Food, corporal." The private - Joe, we called him - smiled innocently. "In deed to goodness," he added, making an obscure pun.

The corporal didn't take kindly to his Nationalism being flippantly taken, thus, and began to roar with anger. I couldn't reproduce the dialogue, even if I wanted to, as I believe the post office, innocent and pure, should not be allowed to increase its vocabulary in such directions. Let it remain confined to "Return to Sender" "Not Known Here", and "Printed Paper Rate". It did, at least, take his mind off the food for a while.

The trouble was, it returned to that delicate subject. Luckily, though, our corporal came along then. He listened to Taff's harangue and questionnaire for a while, then began nudging Taff with his elbow. Taff ignored him, warming up to his subject. The monologue was taking a decidedly sinister tone, with the guard room being mentioned.

Our corporal went on nudging. Eventually, the message - or the elbow - got through, and Taff took notice of our corporal. "Squadie" said: "It's alright, Corporal, I know about this." and I think a wink passed from one to the other.

Taff nodded, grinned slightly, and said:

"You should have more bloody sense than to cart stuff like that around this time of night. Why didn't you get it during working hours, when it would appear legitimate. Use your bloody head and cart normally, what-ever you do - and what's more normal than for soldiers on fatigues to be lugging stuff from kitchen to kitchen?"

Logic irrevocable. I know, I've had some. It is not fun to be carting two freezing tin cans of ice-cream in the middle of a rainstorm half a mile across the camp with one of them gradually slipping out of your hand...

Still gloating over what some may regard as a slightly tarnished subject, we come to the little matters concerned with the technique of getting home when you shouldn't. Some of the lads came from far off places like Birmingham, and some even from foreign countries like Scotland, but many lived fairly near the camp - thirty, forty, fifty miles away. Normally, we were allowed to leave the camp on a Sunday, so long as we weren't on any duty. In actual fact, we finished work on Saturday morning, and were usually free to do whatever we liked from then on,

provided our kit was ready for the Monday inspection. One or two of us were married, and faunched for going home on Saturday, and spending the night there. Unfortunately, 36 hour passes were virtually unobtainable, and at 10.30 every night, the Night Orderly Sergeant (who was always a corporal, strangely) came round for a bed check.

Of course, it was entirely up to the corporal on duty over the weekend how he dealt with the situation. He had, of course, to carry out the bed check, in case a higher official was wandering round. Usually, the corporal wasn't in the least concerned with who was around and who wasn't. So long as all beds were accounted for, and he was satisfied the occupants of the empty beds were in the toilet, everything was alright. But at one time, the camp became quite conscious of the fact that various people were sliding away for a whole weekend, and tightened up. One corporal from another company was found, I believe, to have lost about fifty men from his company one Saturday.

So the result was that for a time, the corporals kept a better check on the men than normal. This, of course, was easily overcome. The corporal can only check one billet at a time. Say John wants to go home. He contacts a lad from another billet slips him five bob to lie in his bed when the NOS comes round. The NOS comes round, notes that somebody is in John's bed, and is happy. NOS leaves the room. The substitute whips out of John's bed, and returns to his own billet. Either the corporal has visited his billet, or he hasn't. If he hasn't, then the substitute just returns to his own bed. If he has, the corporal will have found him missing. One of his mates will have told the corporal he had gone to the toilet. The corporal - unbelieving - will take his locker card away with him, to the company office. The substitute just goes up to the company office, and collects his card, thus proving he was actually still on the camp. Simple.

One Saturday, a chap called John wanted to go home, so he arranged with a fellow called Mike to perform the Crookham Bed Trick, or whatever it was called. At ten o'clock, or soon after, Mike duly came to our billet, and bedded down, head buried beneath some pillows, and generally making himself as anonymous as possible. As you might expect, things went wrong that night, and this is written to give you part of the setting for that most harrowing night - the night that Things strange came to an innocent Army Camp, Things that do not belong to the Twentieth Century...

THE SUBJECT OF Mescaline has about been run into the ground, and to relieve those who might be groaning on reading this heading, I'm not mentioning it at all here. However, a number of people seem to think that irresponsibility of action does not enter as a factor causing people to take drugs unnecessarily. It's pleasant to be able to say, though, that this is a minority view. But up til now I'd only read about people who take a drug just for the kicks. I'd not met any.

Only, in the army, I did. No, I didn't meet somebody who shot himself an armful of heroin. No, nothing like that. But I met someone with the type of mind who could quite easily become an addict - the type of person who suffers the greatest danger when he reads about the effects of some drug.

His name was Henry, and he was a cultured person with a well modulated voice. He used to go quite often into Aldershot to visit friends of his, and this particular Saturday, he went there as usual. Nobody saw his going - nobody particularly bothered. Several of us that evening decided to go to the camp cinema, and it was soon after ten when we returned. The first thing we noticed was a most peculiar

smell, a very hospitable smell - and very familiar to me, though for the moment I couldn't place it.

"What's the smell in aid of?" I asked somebody.

"It's Henry..."

Apparently, what had happened was that Henry had come back from Aldershot a few minutes ago in a reasonably normal condition, but grinning his stupid head off about something. He vanished to the latrines without anybody really noticing him, and when he returned, he was wobbling all over the place, and singing as happily as any drunk. And this smell was overpowering. Speculation on his condition was what you might expect it to be; Henry wandered happily about for a minute or so, then disappeared, which was before I came in.

Jack, who was also a pharmacist, and myself tried to figure out what it was that was smelling. We came to the conclusion that it smelt most like some anaesthetic, and we became a bit worried about Henry. Just then, in he came again, swaying as before. He wasn't singing now; he looked thoroughly drunk. The smell was still around him.

Again, he wandered round aimlessly, muttered a few words to one of us. He suddenly said, quite clearly, that he wasn't feeling too good, went to his bed, and collapsed onto it.

We found a small, green, hexagonal bottle with vertical grooves by his side. It was labelled with the name of a substance often used as an anaesthetic.

Why in turnation had he got that stuff? It later turned out that one of his friends had told him that he could get drunk on ninepence.

"Drunk on ninepence? How?"

The friend told him the name of the stuff. "If you buy a bottle from a chemists, and sniff some of it up, you'll be drunk in ten seconds flat. Smashing feeling..."

So, Henry bought it - and passed out on his bed. One of us fetched the corporal from his room. The corporal opened his collar, made sure there was plenty of air. Henry was regaining some semblance of consciousness. "Take deep breaths," the corporal said. This was a mistake - inhaling deeply when an anaesthetic has been taken heightens the amount of anaesthesia. Poor Henry started to tremble very violently - we thought he would have a fit.

After a while, he stopped trembling, and appeared to be sleeping. We put him to bed. Meanwhile, somebody had gone off to the company office, and about half a dozen corporals came round. We decided there was no need to fetch the MO - Henry would have been in trouble if they'd found out what happened to him. Or, rather, what he did.

The corporals stayed about for a long time, nattering away. Meanwhile, it was supposed to be time for bed-check, and our poor friend Mike was lying huddled under the sheets of John's bed, as scared as hell, waiting for them to go away. The corporal doing bed-check came round, was satisfied everybody was present, and continued his round. Mike was faunching to return to his own billet, so he could collect his bed-card if it was taken. Five minutes passed. Well, five minutes was a reasonable time to spend in the toilet.

Only, it soon became half an hour, and the corporals showed no signs of leaving. And half an hour is not a reasonable time, by any means. (Though there was one character who used to spend a long time there. He used to take a newspaper with him to read. One day, one of the lads lit a match and threw it over the door. The newspaper caught fire - the chap never read a newspaper on the toilet again.)

Eventually, we managed to get rid of the corporals, and dispatched Mike to his own quarters, and it transpired, luckily, that he had not been missed. However, it could quite easily have ended in both Mike and John getting caught. However, the story isn't finished there. There was still Henry to be looked after.

The nature of the particular anaesthetic he had decided to get his kicks from - and, incidentally, it's coming gradually to public notice that certain people, notably doctors and anaesthetists, are becoming addicted to anaesthetics - is such that nausea is a common side-reaction. Since Henry was sleeping, this meant that somebody would have to stay up and keep an eye on him. If a person vomits whilst he is asleep, it's odds on that he will choke on some of his own vomit, and be asphyxiated.

We organized a rota system to keep watch on him, and those who weren't watching went to bed. I was on the first shift, although I needn't have stayed up at all. But it gave me an opportunity for finishing something I might not have got around to for several days after that. Let me go back a bit...

VINCE CLARKE, IN THE LAST EGGPLANT, gave me a wee bit of advice for that day I first go into the army. He suggested that if I maintained a sense of the unreal as far as my dubious mental processes went, I couldn't go far wrong. Ah, me...

I guess it was my own fault, though. I should have chosen my escape mechanism more carefully. When I first arrived at Crookham, things were pretty hectic, and I didn't have much time to do very much in the way of fanac. I was, in fact, confined to writing a report of a convention I never attended.

Then, my bed-mate Harry decided to write a play. To, specifically, write a play for television. This set me off. I figured that with all the Great New Experiences opening up all round me, this was the time to inject reality into my stories, and thus the best time to try and crash the pro-markets.

I'd had an idea for a vampire story ever since the previous October, when I'd been looking at the moon from a coach whilst I was returning from Dunstable, where I'd been breaking the gliding instructor's heart. So, I began to write it. Naturally, the lads were curious. I told them it was a letter, but after the third or fourth page that didn't hold water any longer. In the end, I confessed - and I don't think I had a moment's peace from then on. Forever, there was a chant of 'Drinks Pinta Blooda Day' and I think I was generally known as THE VAMPIRE. At least, I wasn't known as a fan, which would have been worst. The few fanzines I had me I quickly made sure would bring doom on anybody who touched them, and, oddly enough, they believed me. However, the lads were very nice to me. Knowing how I declored the vegetables served out in no 2 Kitchen, they very kindly bought me a few twigs of garlic, which I thought was very decent of them, though I don't like the stuff.

But I think they began to go a little mad, then, for they all began to fashion stakes out of lengths of ash wood, and polish them. The corporal thought they were mad, too, and attributed it at first to the effect of the British Army, and later more specifically to confinement together for too long. He gave up trying to make the lads get rid of the sticks, and made them polish them to a high degree of bull, instead. They soon shone like our boots were supposed to. And then, the corporal went mad, too.

Cheerfully accepting the mickey-taking in the spirit in which it was obviously intended, I continued to scribble away. Eventually, I finished the first draft, and started to revise the thing before typing it out on the camp typewriter which I managed to get permission to use. On the Saturday night in question, I'd gotten stuck, and wanted to do a fairly considerable rewrite on certain sections. Sitting for a couple of hours watching over Henry I thought would be an ideal time to work on it. And, so, I did. I worked steadily, and eventually came to the end. Henry

was sleeping quite peacefully; no trouble from him. I found, the work finished, that I was feeling very tired. My eyelids began to droop. The barrack room was silent and dark save for a single 40 bulb glowing. Everyone was asleep. I thought of them sleeping there, thought how I wished it were me, with my nose buried in the soft warmth of the pillows, sheet yanked over my left ear, and one toe tucked comfortably over the end of the bed...

I must have dozed off.

I think it was the full blaze of lights and the muttering of many astonished voices that awoke me. I was suspended from one of the horizontal beams across the roof of the hut by my feet, and my cape was drawn around my folded body. At least, I think it was my Army Issue cape...

THEY'RE ALL LOOKING AT ME, MUM!

REMEMBERING THAT THIS ZINE WAS SUPPOSED TO DEAL MAINLY WITH COLLECTING... I've been knocking around for several years looking for old books, mainly in the London bookshops, but on occasion broadening my field of endeavour to include the provincial bookshops. Personally, with few exceptions, I hate them. To explain why, I'll have to ramble for a while, gradually working round to giving you a picture of the second-hand book trade as I see it.

I'll admit that I'm probably not seeing it with both eyes, but only with one. To really know what you're talking about with regard to such a subject, you have to be a dealer yourself. Up to the present time, I've successfully resisted all attempts on friends of mine to cajole me into becoming a dealer. As far as science-fiction is concerned, I'm more interested in increasing my collection than in making money - I spent several years in college making sure I'd be in a position to be able to earn plenty - and as far as general book-dealing is concerned - HELP!

I was first introduced to old science-fiction books by Arthur Sellings. I knew absolutely nothing about them, and when I started searching for them, for a long time I couldn't find a thing because I didn't know what to look for. I was receiving one or two catalogues from dealers, and, scouring them, gradually formed for myself a picture of the various books that were rare, what particular branch of fantasy they belonged to, the various authors who wrote several s-f titles, and so on. Over two or three years, I learned about the various books, and, above all, acquired that knack every book hunter should have - being able to pick out a promising title from the middle of a shelf of books when even that title doesn't convey a suggestion that it might be fantasy.

I used to visit a large number of shops on my bike, and gradually got to know the various owners. I also found that, in general, science-fiction of pre-war vintage was a subject known to them to be valuable, and in demand in the trade. Most of this demand, I discovered, was due to a couple of specialist dealers in s-f who were always asking for certain titles in the trade, and were in the habit of touring the shops regularly to denude the shelves of their s-f stock. As this stock is never very large - usually one or two titles only - you can imagine that the task becomes, if not impossible, then very arduous. And these titles are inevitably stacked up in price - I can't blame them for that, I suppose, but it's a bit annoying that you can never get a George Griffith title for the same price as any

other novel published the same time and in the same format. Fortunately, though, the average general bookseller doesn't have a specialised knowledge of the field, and with the exception of such authors as Griffith, M.P. Shiel, E.R. Eddison, Lord Dunsany, James Branch Cabell, etc., does not know which authors to charge for, and which not.

And if you can visit the shops sufficiently often, you can beat the specialist dealers and their occasional visits. At least, you would be able to, if it wasn't for an additional member of the book scene. He's called the 'runner', and owns a shop of his own. His main object in life is to tour the bookshops, buy copies of a book at one shop which he knows he can sell for a profit to another dealer, and thus makes a living. These fellows are very prevalent; I'm always running across them in various shops and on the few occasions I have gone to the sale rooms. They are generally fascinating to talk to; their knowledge of books is fantastic, and frequently exceeds that of the average shop owner.

However, for the likes of me, they are a nuisance. Their main stamping ground is London, and, as I said before, there are many of them. Yet, in one way, there are a god-send. After all, they, like the booksellers, are not specialists in fantasy, and usually miss the same items as the shopkeepers toss into the sixpennies. On the other hand, their knowledge of books, gained mostly from years of visiting and talking to other dealers, and of their values is almost fathomless, and, and this is an important point, they give the shop-keeper an idea of the correct prices to charge for his stock. Unfortunately, they are only prevalent in London, where there are sufficient shops to keep them in business.

In the charming provincial bookshops, where'd you'd expect the dealers to be less well acquainted with prices, instead of finding bargains, you find yourself being stung left right and centre. How come? To understand the mechanics of this seeming peculiarity, you need only take a look at the Book Auction Records, and you'll find the culprit staring you in your sensitive fannish face. The Book Auctions Records is what it says it is - a periodical which catalogues the books presented at the major book auctions, and gives the prices fetched.

Fair enough, you say. And these poor provincial dealers, with less contact with others of the ilk than the Londoners, should have a source on which to base their prices. This would be alright if it wasn't for the fact that the prices fetched at the Book Auctions weren't usually so absolutely unrealistic. A book whose actual value is, say, two pounds, will fetch ten there. This is mainly due to the fact that the people bidding for the items are those bidding for a customer of theirs, and in most cases, this particular customer is so keen to have the book that he's prepared to pay a fantastic price for it.

And the net result is that the provincial booksellers, basing their prices on those in the Book Auction Records, charges inflated prices - and it's next to impossible to convince them otherwise. The only thing you can do if you see a book in one of these shops is to decide whether it's worth the price to you. This means that if you're not to be stung, you have to know your field inside out.

Finally, to end on a thoroughly sour note, the following incident happened to me over the Whitsun weekend. As some of you know, several fans met at Kettering over the weekend to have a generally jolly time. On the Saturday, however, in the company of Ted Forsyth, I visited another town nearby, and, naturally, scoured the bookshops it had to offer. One of these shops we spent a fair time in, and eventually, I dug out a couple of books I wanted for my collection. One of them was a fairly

if you just want to read a fantasy story, it's best to leave such cases alone, but if you're interested in a particular mythos or character, then you're a fake-fantast by ignoring the mundanes.

Don't assume, by the way, that the 1930 listing of the publishing date of Domnei is that of the first edition. It is not - far from it. It was first published in 1913. However, you'd do far better by hunting for the 1930 edition, which is one of a series of books known in the trade as the Bodley Head remainders. The most famous of this series are the fantasies of Anatole France, and these are still to be seen once in a while. They are tall volumes, approximately the size of the typing area of this page - if I don't go mad, and, in the throes of a stream of consciousness, go on typing down to number 75 on the stencil - and are handsomely bound in black, with gold lettering. They retailed originally at 15/- to 25/-, and were, frankly, de lux editions. They were illustrated by some of the best black and white artists of the day, of whom Frank C. Pape is one of the most sought after. Sort of junior-grade Beardsley in the eyes of the trade.

Anatole France - and James Branch Cabell. The trouble is, the Cabell titles are almost impossible to locate, and command premium prices when copies are tracked down. Jurgen, I presume, is the cause. This book, when first published in 1919, was suggested by some as being pornographic. There was a big legal hassle over it, in its day as furious as the current tussle over Lolita. ((Not so current, now that this is being typed in October.)) The book became famous over-night, which did the largely neglected Cabell a little financial good. In fact, he has become one of the relatively few authors to accumulate a faithful following of ~~sheep~~ admirers. The first British edition of Jurgen was published in the 'Remainder' format, and was limited to 2000 copies. It was profusely illustrated by Pape - and these illustrations are some of the most wonderful I have ever seen. Here indeed, had an artist found the writer he was best fitted to illo - the writer to whom his style was attuned. Frank C. Pape and James Branch Cabell. Some of you may remember how Edd Cartier gelled perfectly with Unknown. How Merritt's fantasies found their home in the pencil and pasteboard of Virgil Finlay. How Sidney H Sime was the illustrator of Lord Dunsany's early fables of gods and men. And, yes - can you think of anyone to do better justice to John Berry than Arthur Thomson? The crying shame is that these Pape illoed Cabells - and there are several titles - are so hard to find, and so expensive.

One last point - or, rather, a query. Does anybody know if these editions were published in the States?

CAINE, William & FAIRBAIRN, John, The Confectioners. Bristol, J.W.Arrowsmith, 1906. 315. Map. (Or chart or plan or something.) People ask, sometimes: "What made you pick up that book?" And this one, to go by the title, doesn't sound in the least fantastic, or science-fictional. It conjures up a vision of a Victorian novel about a little sweet shop round the corner, into which little old ladies pop to get their bullseyes, and where impecunious little boys are caught stealing a single sweet and birched. As to what it is I'll leave to a later page, and Joy's tender mercies.

(To ~~whom~~ I must apologise - the colophon somewhere near the beginning of this issue indicates this was produced in the summer. Joy's review was written so long ago that I could still remember civilian life, and I hope she can still remember reading the book. While still in the time-binding mood, I think I might as well give you the benefit of a second colophon, which will appear over-leaf. Meanwhile, I'm still at the same address, have managed to attain the all-powerful rank of corporal, and I do most of my military work at night. I work twelve hours a night, from eight to eight, during which I sleep, do some fanag, and give generously to the Army matters at least an hour of my time. I am also the recipient of a generous helping of leave, and if I hold my current job, I estimate that of the two years the army has

control of my destiny, I shall only be serving eighteen months. But don't tell the War Office. This issue of Eye Tracks (still the second, by the way) is published for the winter mailing of OMPA, and will probably go to a few other people as well. It is published by 23787189 Cpl George Locke, 3 Company, RAMC, Connaught Hospital, Bromshott, Hindhead, Surrey, England. It likes to think it is mainly slanted towards old fantasies, but so far, most of its wordage has been about the slightly sordid topic of the army. It, however, assures me that from now on, this anomaly is to be corrected, and reminds me that the place for entering publishing details - most of which are redundant, anyway - is not in the middle of a book review. It will, however, just give me time to add that material - articles and the like - of a bibliographic nature (or anything connected with early fantastic literature) is desperately launched for.)

Back to Caine and Fairbairn...

I first picked this book from the shelves because of its publisher. When hunting for old fantasies, you can't always go by the title - who would imagine that beneath the innocent title of 'Mr Stranger's Sealed Packet' lay a Marrian adventure? It is therefore easy to miss a good book because you don't know of it and the title is unlikely. However, it is equally impossible to go through every book you see minutely, or you'll still be there when Earth evolves another dominant species.

The period from 1890 to 1910 is one of the most productive as far as interplanetary and other science fiction is concerned. The majority of these books appeared under the imprint of one of a number of publishers specialising in the popular romance. Several of these are still active today, whilst many others have died or been swallowed up.

I'm going to take a list of these people. Included also are some better-class publishers; and they're in no particular order. Here goes:

Greening. F.V.White. Digby, Long & Co. Hutchinson. Smith and Elder. Pearsons. Tower Publishing Company. (No relation to the post-war American cheap reprint people.) Duckworth. Heinemann. Methuen. Arrowsmith. Mills and Boon. Chapman and Hall. Grant Richards.

And a good many more, there were. They all had this in common - they published books. To cut the field down, they all published novels from time to time. Some more than others. Some more successfully than others. Which ones has the average reader of today heard of? Hutchinson, for sure. Heinemann. Methuen, although they do little fiction nowadays. Mills and Boon, possibly - I think they've lowered their sights to a line in cheap romances - love without lust, Chapman and Hall I think are still going. Most of the rest have disappeared.

When you look through the publishers catalogues of the turn of the century, you'll find that they all seemed, at first glance, to have published much the same kind of fiction. The late Victorian romance. Most of them ran a line of detective stories, mostly imitative of good old Sherlock. Looove was dispensed by all and sundry in large doses. However, I've not gone into these branches of fictional literature to any noticeable degree, so I can't give any indication of which publishers preferred which. Science-fantasy, though, is another matter. Through experience, I've had to find some way of arbitrarily deciding which publishers to give the benefit of my beady eyes, and which publishers are unlikely to prove productive in my search for the Great and Forgotten S-F novel. The publishers imprint is invariably at the bottom of the spine, and these are readily recognisable. A mere glance is enough. Now..

The following publishers: Greening, F.V.White, Digby Long, Everett, Pearson's and Hutchinson were all very adept at turning out a line of generally sensational, highly 'popular' (in the sense that they catered for the common herd, the people who would today read war books and flip from channel to channel on the television) fiction.

Their science-fantasy - which, being generally of a sensational nature, they published a large amount - is defined by saying that George Griffith was their typical author - the leader of the clan. I suppose I will bring down a number of fans on my back in wrath, but I'll bare it ready by saying that he was the turn of the century Bob Silverberg. It was he who probably influenced many of his contemporaries working for the same publishers as Wells, who, incidentally, had his most productive period s-f-wise running parallel with Griffith. Griffith produced a large number of s-f stories, few (apart from the first two or three) of which have any real merit. Many merely repeat themselves. They are generally somewhat stodgy and rather unimaginative.

His speciality was future war marmaladed with super-weapons, and were the result of the immense popularity of his first two books, ANGLE OF THE REVOLUTION and OLGA ROMANOFF. He also tossed in the odd lost race story, interplanetary, and the occasional weird. Surprisingly - but this probably results of his being a contemporary - he pinched very little, if anything, from Wells. He explored s-f possibilities - if he explored them at all - along a simply popular level. There was little or no real thought, real invention behind his stuff.

But the people who read these cheap, poorly written sensational novels lapped it all up, and their resulting brisk sales inspired more like it from other writers. Thus, a search of the publications of the list of publishers I gave a couple of paragraphs ago will result in plenty of s-f, but nothing very striking. An occasional good idea, interesting gimmick, but nothing very lasting. No classics, in fact. Some of these old hacks were Harris Burland (Whose odd fantasy DACOBRA is genuinely worth reading, by the way), Robert Cromie, Charles Hamman, Austin Fryers, W Holt-White, William Le Queux, Edward Markwick, Cora Minnett and Edwin Pallander. Some of them have a certain charm, most are interesting for the occasional intriguing ideas they contain, but few, if any, are worth reading more than once. If you can get through it the first time, even.

They've practically all disappeared - the majority are extremely difficult to find, and the ground is - not surprisingly - therefore very rich for the discovery of completely unheard-of titles. Many of these writers, too, only turned out the occasional s-f. Several are well-known as detective writers.

Most of the publishers of these sensational novels dies after a relatively short run - much as the pocket-book publishers of today's 'enlightened' age will be forgotten tomorrow.

Although the odd one, like Hutchinson, is still around. Other publishers - Smith and Elder, Heinemann, Methuen and Chapman and Hall - didn't quite achieve the same low level of sensational fiction. Their products were usually more literary, more sensible, more adult. It may sadden those like myself who delight in discovering hitherto unheard-of s-f, but you'll find few or no such works in their catalogues. However, looking through my collection, I find a large number of their books. As many, publisher for publisher, as the first group.

The reason for this, of course, is that they published what are now termed 'The Classics'. Dunsany, Wells, Hodgson, some Shiel, and, later, dear old Stapledon. Blackwood was published mainly by the highly respectable MacMillan. (Excuse me, by the way, for including fantasy - much the same applies to weirds.)

So we have settled that certain publishers did the now accepted classics, and others produced a high score of little-known crud. There are still a few on this list I made out at the beginning of this lengthy harangue that I haven't touched.

Duckworth is a small publisher, notable mainly for publication of the Viereck and Eldridge fantasies of the Immortal Jew. Grant Richards published quite a lot of fantasy, with a tendency for the off-beat. Much of Shiel first saw the cobwebs of eye tracks from their presses. A very well-worth-while source for lesser known s-f and fantasy, if you want something better written and more imaginative than

the average. Mills and Boon - almost hundred percent love romances - but with the occasional surprising excursion into the fantastic. Smith and Elder hardly ever touched fantasy - they can be safely ignored.

And, of course, Arrowsmith. This publisher came up with a remarkable number of remarkably off-beat books. Amongst their regular contributors were such as F Anstey and Hillaire Belloc. And the general tone of their publications can, I think, be summed up by these two authors, explaining the presence of such titles as the Wells parody THE WAR OF THE VENUSES and - and this book, THE CONFECTIONERS.

All of which, to sum up what I feel has gone on too long, is to say that some publishers are good sources of s-f, others do very little, others have a completely off-beat policy, others do cheap, sensational rubbish, and...

But this was probably obvious before I started on these stencils. I think I'd better hand over to Joy to review THE CONFECTIONERS.

THE CONFECTIONERS reviewed by JOY SANDERSON

Around the time when no-body heard of science-fiction and thought imaginative romances were terribly fast going, two authors got together and wrote a story which, even today, falls into the category of straight s-f. William Caine and John Fairbairn plucked the idea ostensibly out of a conversation carried on in a restaurant, where the kidneys appeared as artificial as if they'd been turned out by a machine.

Combined with this idea, they used a quotation from Alice:

"He said, I hunt for haddock's eyes
Among the heather bright
I work them into waistcoat-buttons
In the silent night."

Not satisfied, they decided to ham to book up properly, so every few pages the authors break off for a meal, or an argument, and these pages, in italics, hold some of the most amusing episodes in the book. Fairbairn is a lazy slob - he'd rather go fishing than write (although he considers it as his book): Caine is a scrounger - he never pays for a drink, a meal, or, if he can help it, anything at all, and he never minds borrowing. He usually goes away with at least half-a-crown borrowed from Fairbairn, especially when he has promised to write at least another part of a chapter for Fairbairn.

The story proper starts with two writers out for a walk in search of copy: Bertie St. John, Occasional Journalist, rich (but not from writing) with a large circle amongst the fourth estate most of whom sponged on him for drinks and meals. Bertie unfortunately had never been published but diligently searched for copy for articles nonetheless. William Quilliam, his poet companion, is a Failure-at-the-Bar. He, too, has private resources which makes him a favourite of women. These two, complete with dog, are wandering around the country looking for the people who search for haddock's-eyes, which are sold at fabulous prices to the beau monde. During their conversation the scene is set: A world in which foolishness is praised - the sillier one can be, the more honoured. A world in which one Simon Muddock uses a German preparation which "can be made to serve as an innocuous almond icing for bride-cake, or as an unbreakable form of vulcanite." Their dreams wander to a material which can be made into ANYTHING.

Eventually, they meet Granfer Peabody, champion Haddock's-eye gatherer, who finds the biggest one ever, and through him, the rest of the people at the haddock's-eye-dealers, who polish and prepare them for sale. Alas, Simon Muddock has found a method of producing these with his German preparation, and the haddock's-eye gatherers and preparers are now out of work. Hatred is beginning to build up against Muddock.

We are now introduced to Muddock himself. In a comic opera sequence we are shown

his frustrated, bullied and brow-beaten employees - several of whom are sent down chutes from Muddock's own office either to fiery oblivion or the cold, unwelcoming street, the latter permitting William Gruntle, discoverer of the Universal Substance which will make anything, to meet Bean, ex-haddocks-eyes-button-maker, now jobless and with him to decide to do Muddock down - one way or another.

Meanwhile, back at the cooking range, Caine and Fairbairn are in another argument. Not enough feminine interest has been inserted. So Caine obligingly writes in Vespertilia, daughter of Muddock, a brilliant chemist, refused a partnership in Muddocks by her father, who leaves him and goes to stay with her friend Lucy. Lucy is married to Ramsbotham Jewel, editor of the Ventilator, avowed adversary of Somin Muddock, mouthpiece of the anti-Muddock party.

Meanwhile, Bean and Gruntle have conspired to meet Meager, a former workmate of Gruntle's in the Muddock factory, who has invented a method of tapping Universal Power, and together they decide how to get some money to finance a factory that will put Simon Muddock in hook. They go to visit St. John and Quilliam, who you will recall had pots and POTS of money and, because these two think it is the silliest idea they ever heard, they agree to finance them. Now silly ideas - in this world - are all right, but they mustn't make money, because that then proves they were not silly enough. Unfortunately for St. John and Quilliam, the Universal Substance and the Universal Power are just what is needed to make oodles and oodles.

and it does - despite all attempts by Muddock to prevent them obtaining factory space or building a factory or getting workers. Vespertilia, of course, who hears by way of Jewel of the superb efforts of this gang in the fight against her father, joins them.

Things get more and more complicated - they have difficulties at first in getting supplies to make the Universal Substance: they have difficulties with the trades unions, the members of whom naturally are out of work, their manufacturing skills no longer being required when the Universal Substance can supply everything cheaper and more quickly.

So Muddock has hopes of winning after all - and Mr Petruski, spy, is infiltrated into the Gruntle factory under the quickly-penetrated disguise of Tammus Welcome of Darset. However, since the disguise was spotted so soon, our gang decide to have some fun with him. And, with the wonderful Universal Power, they smite him with aphasia and sent him back to Muddock.

Unfortunately Petruski, who has meanwhile been permitted to learn EVERYTHING about the business, cannot communicate his findings to Muddock and flees before his rage. Muddock decides "If we can't beat them, we will destroy them," and riding his faithful airship sets out to bestir the Trades Unions in a march upon the factory.

A battle royal ensues with Muddock urging on his battalions from the airship - only Gruntle and Vespertilia escape, Muddock, eventually joining in the battle, being dragged by Meager into a vat of Universal Substance. The horror of this sight drives all memory of his formulae from Gruntle's mind and he and Vespertilia leave the factory which blows up with all the participants in the battle. Gruntle laid his hand trustingly in hers, and so, daring the future, they went together down the hill."

This fairly comprehensive outline is necessary as few people will have the chance of reading The Confectioners - as far as I know, George is the only person who has a copy. It is satire and hamming at its broadest, but it is still science fiction in its concepts. I can imagine that, in its day, it caused broad laughs whereas nowadays with so much subtle satire available we tend to be a bit more blase about such things. Even so this is a book I thoroughly enjoyed and which I think you also will enjoy if you ever come across a copy. And hope that it had as its frontispiece the diagram of the Muddock factory complete with exercising yards and the Boss's private Shoots!

---Joy Sanderson.

Locke here again. I managed to dig up an extra copy of The Confectioners. If anybody would like to read it, they're welcome. I might even part with it for some old fanzines or something.

CASEY. Robert J. Cambodian Quest. Elkin Mathews and Harrot. London. 1932. 298. This author, who divided his talents between factual books about lost civilisations and detective stories, has here written one of these irritating borderline books which can best be described as a lost race story without any people. Just the city they used to live in. I'll content myself by quoting a short passage.

"Save for the droning of the insects, the chatter of monkeys and the occasional falling of tree branches in the jungle, the Lost City was silent. Leaves hung motionless in a heavy, breezeless atmosphere. The steep pyramid of the temple lifted its three stages out of a billow of heat waves, a thing as eerie and unreal as the ghosts with which imagination peopled it."

Needless to say, it's set in Cambodia, and is a relatively readable yarn.

COLLINGWOOD. Harry. Harry Escombe. A Tale of Adventure in Peru. Blackie and son. London. 1910. 303. Illustrated. This time a genuine lost race story, but, like all the

author's books, written for the teenage market of fifty years ago. A goodly percentage of the best lost race stories of the period 1880 to 1910 were intended for the juvenile market, and such able practitioners as Gordon Stables wrote quite a number. Some of the stories, such as this one, of interest only as a comment-hook, are very juvenile, others, such as Stables', are so-so. But many of them are as adult as H. Rider Haggard's, even though they originally appeared in boy's papers and are advertised as being for boys. Jules Verne, of course, is the prime example of an author the publishers tried to unload onto kids. David Lawson Johnstone and Andre Laurie are other, lesser-known writers whose material is more often picked from the juvenile shelves than from the adult. Laurie, a contemporary of Verne's, and occasionally a collaborator with The Master, had several books translated into English, nearly all science-fiction. He is a bad example of what I was talking about earlier in this paragraph, as he didn't write many lost race stories - CRYSTAL CITY UNDER THE SEA is the only one I can think of, off hand - but Johnstone is an excellent one. His three lost race novels are not too sadly short of the standard set by Haggard, and well worth getting.

Even though one, THE PARADISE OF THE NORTH, was first published as a serial in Young Peoples' Journal.

COLLINGWOOD. Harry. With Airship and Submarine. Blackie and Son. London. ca 1910. 376. Illustrated. A third book in his series about a super flying machine-cum-submarine. The other two, in case you're interested, were LOG OF THE FLYING FISH, and the CRUISE OF THE FLYING FISH. Another field of fiction of the turn of the century which was thoroughly covered by the juvenile market, the general level of the flying ship stories was, however, much lower than of the lost race verns. Herbet Strang is the type author of this series. Enough said.

DAVIDSON. John. The Pilgrimage of Strong soul, and other stories. Ward and Downey. London. 1896. 278.

It's the other stories that are interesting. The title story, a novella, is a somewhat juvenile, philosophic story about children which I couldn't be bothered to discover if it was fantastic. As the author is one of those whom a certain literary set regards fairly highly, it may also possess a certain literary merit which raises it above the level of the average fairy-tale. THE GLASGOW GHOSTS may be all right - I didn't read it, though. THE SCHOOLBOY'S TRAGEDY sounds much

the same as the first. It's the last two that interest us - or, at least, interested me. EAGLE'S SHADOW starts off with a clerk called Ebenezer Eaglasham who works in an office reminiscent of Dickens. As an office boy, he had rubbed a dirty patch in the wall over the years through always leaning his head and shoulders against it. This patch, known as Eagle's shadow, was augmented by succeeding office boys. One day, alone in the office, he's looking at this shape, when it suddenly changes into a little boy reading a book. He's from the future, it seems, and the rest of the story consists of a detailing of the future history of England. There was a passage somewhere that particularly appealed to me - let's see if I can find it. It'll take some doing, as the book has not been cut open, and I have to insert my eye-stalks between every page...

I've a feeling I've just got onto another tangent. Ah, well, never mind. Harry Warner was sayingⁿ the latest HORIZONS a few words about a 15-volume set of Dickens he'd picked up: "I got sentimental about obtaining for \$2.00 these volumes over which some family a couple of generations ago had pored during long winter nights, undoubtedly reading aloud the best-loved stories over and over. But when I got home, I discovered that in most of the volumes, the pages were uncut." This is a phenomenon you rarely see these days, but in the Victorian era, when, presumably, the number of guillotines must have been small and their efficiency very low, publishers didn't always bother to cut the edges of their books with the result that the pages are in clusters corresponding to the signatures of the particular books. I'm afraid I'm right out of my depth here, being unversed in the technicalities of book publishing. The fact remains that to read a book which hasn't been cut by the publisher, you have to get a razor blade and cut it yourself. This, as you may guess, leads to some very frustrating instance of carelessness, where some idiot with a blunt knife or, more likely, his fore-finger, has ripped the pages hither and thither and completely spoiling the book. Also, finding a copy of the book in uncut condition, which means unread, enhances its value. However, it makes it somewhat difficult to read. Being miserly and everything horrible, I read this one without opening the pages.

Anyway, let's find this passage...

Here we are. England has been invaded by European hordes...

"But the European Hordes grew impatient, and several quarters of the city were set on fire, the invaders anticipating that in the confusion they would be enabled to force an entrance. This ruse, however, failed, and the enemy withdrew to their trenches. A truce of several days was asked for and granted. The English rightly judged that the time was to be occupied in preparation for a general attack, and they set themselves to devise means to repel it. They had ammunition and explosives of extraordinary kinds, the nature and the employment of which are alike riddles to us. ((It's the boy from the future speaking.)) One of the numerous stratagems of the besieged we are enabled to describe. Between the city and the external fortifications there extended a belt varying from a hundred to a thousand yards. Many houses were in this space, but they were tenanted only by soldiers on duty. By a superhuman effort a great number of rails were laid across this zone, and all the available engines and railway carriages, charged with explosives and missiles, were placed on them. On the expiry of the truce, as was expected, a furious onslaught began on all sides. Some resistance was made as a blind, but soon all the English withdrew behind the trains. With hideous clamour the enemy rushed like a boiling sea into the awful trap. Some hesitated for a moment, suspecting an ambush, but the thought of the enormous wealth within their grasp urged them on. The trains were all ready; the electric wires all connected with a central battery. At once, at sixty miles an hour, some thousands of death-laden wagons ploughed through the appalled masses of men..."

Such was the siege of London. The second story, THE SALVATION OF NATURE, describes the complete wiping out of civilisation in Scotland, the razing of

that fair land to the ground, and the setting up of The World's Pleasance in its place - a kind of agricultural utopia. Another story I quite liked, but I can't bring to mind anything more about it - and by eye-stalks are already twisted almost beyond repair from examining the other one. An interesting book, on the whole - and an interesting writer.

DANSON. Forbes. A Sensational Trance. Downey and Co. London. 1895. 178. Illustrated.

A strange book, once again raising the knotty problem of whether a relation of dream experiences should be considered fantasy. I think yes, some people think no, and it's been argued about for so long that it's pointless having yet another slam at it. The fact remains that the subject matter of this book, though explained away as events occurring in the tortured mind of a man who, if I remember rightly, was insane, is amply fantastic to suit anyone, and science-fictional in at least one sequence, where the hero goes for a flight in a balloon. Only, this balloon doesn't move an inch. Instead, it works through a device which holds it still while the earth moves round under it. This amounts, therefore, to a no-motion of a thousand miles an hour.

If you'd call Hubbard's FEAR fantastic, you'd call this one fantasy. If you called FEAR mundane, though, then you'd wouldn't include this in Bleiler.

DE HAMONG. Count. A Study of Destiny. Saxon & Co. London. ca 1895. 156. There's a possibility that this book may have been written by Cheiro, the well-known palmistry exponent of the late eighteen hundreds, as his name is suspiciously similar to the Leigh de Hamong to whom this book is credited on the title page. It's not a factual book on borderline occult subjects, though, but a genuine weird tale in its own right. A mere novella, it won't take long to read, and is simply a tale of terror in some catacombs beneath Egypt, and of a man who has a snake growing out of his arm, slowly developing until finally, an adult serpent, it bites him. Naturally, he dies. Me, I'd have died from terror long before the damn thing grew to any length. It is suitably bound in black, with ghostly lettering and a serpent forming the cover decoration.

DE ROUGEMONT. Louis. (Henri Louis Grin) Adventures of Louis de Rougemont. Newnes. London. 1899. 396. Illustrated. Once upon a time, there was a magazine called Wide World. The fact that it still exists, thriving, is not important. It was a vastly different magazine in the days when it first started. Whilst printing the same kind of material then as it does now - adventures in the remote parts of the world - it used to guarantee the accuracy of its stories. This happy state of affairs did not last more than a couple of years, for it had the incredibly bad fortune to publish this story. The long-suffering public can only stand so much, and this apparently proved too much of a strain upon their credibility. Though it's not particularly fantastic when compared to THE NIGHT LAND, A VOYAGE TO ARCTURUS, and CITY OF GOLD, it is still an incredible tale. Purportedly the adventures of a man lost in Australia for many years, it describes his numerous adventures with the aborigines and other tribes, and contains at least one genuinely fantastic sequence - about witch-craft.

A couple of years ago, I spent a fair amount of time digging up information on s-f published in magazines like Strand in the British Museum. About this time I first came across this book, and looked up information about the author. I can't remember if I ever took notes, beyond noting down his real name on the title page of my copy, and if I did, they're probably so deeply buried that if I were to search solidly every day, I'd still get into FIPA before finding them. Beyond the vague recollection that there was a national scandal about this supposedly true story, which may have included a court case, there's no more I can say. It would, in fact, be easier to go to the British Museum again than look for these hypothetical notes. If anybody's

interested, say so in your letter of comment, and I'll dig the information up for the next issue.

DRYASDUST. The Wizard's Mantle. (No publisher or place of publication). (1902) 289. Illustrated. When I was lucky enough to find this book in a little shop in Charing Cross Road, I thought the title page was missing. There was a frontispiece, showing a mediaval gentleman in his study - an alchemist's study, if the skull in the background is any judge - and opposite it another illustration with the following information on it: THE WIZARD'S MANTLE by Dryasdust with illustrations by the author. Photographed by Morse, Putney, S.W. This I suspected was a half-title, and that the title page had taken a walk during the past sixty years. The British Museum's copy, however, was identical to mine, so I had to conclude that the volume had been privately printed. As to who the author was - even the British Museum had no idea, and the author had signed the copy for the museum 'presented by the author'. This didn't help.

The book is a weird story about magicians and the like, set in Spain at the time of the Inquisition. It was reprinted, in revised form, by Thomas Burleigh in 1903 under the M.Y. Halidom byline. Press notices in Burleigh's books indicated that it proved quite a popular book. With quite a delightful amount of blood spilled, I'm not surprised.

M.Y. Halidom is quite unlikely to prove to be the author's real name, being an archaic English term meaning 'My sainthood' or 'my oripes.' He was obviously determined to keep his real identity secret. As his entire literary output under these names appeared to be weird and fantastic fiction, I wonder if this was a writer of mundane fiction who wished to prevent knowledge of the versatility of his imagination reaching the public. I wonder... Maybe by the time I get to the Hs, I'll know something more.

And that seems to have finished the Ds. However, before I go on to the mailing comments, there's one more book I'd like to bore you with. It's not a fantasy, or even a work of fiction, but it is of interest bibliographically. It is:

Jurgen and the Law. edited by GUY HOLT. Robert M. McBride & Co. 1923. 78 pages. Edition limited to 1080 copies. During a book-hunting (and fan-hunting) trip to Belfast financed in part by the British Army, I came across a second-hand bookshop on the outskirts of the town. Along with a surprising number of fantasy titles I found a whole shelf of Cabell titles (in the ordinary edition, unfortunately). They were nearly all mint in dust wrapper, and I would have dearly loved to pick them up, but I was already loaded down with books, and had to leave them. Maybe some day I'll purchase them through the post. But among them was this interesting little volume, which I grabbed. Put out by the publishers of the original edition of Jurgen, it contains "A STATEMENT with exhibits, including the Court's Opinion, and the Brief for the Defendants on Motion to Direct and Acquittal.

The history of Jurgen, Cabell's most highly acclaimed novel, is known to all readers, I imagine, as having been steeped during its early years with court actions similar to the rows which occurred over Lolita, and very similar to that now hitting the headlines over dear old Lady Chatterley. Simply, what happened, according to the prelude to this book was that "Mr Walter J Kingsley, a theatrical press agent, sent to the literary editor of a New York newspaper a letter directing attention to James Branch Cabell's Jurgen as a source of low pleasure to the sophisticated and of menace to the moral welfare of Broadway." The letter, which is quoted in full in the book, we'll be content with quoting a passage:

"...Jurgen, which deftly and knowingly treats in thinly veiled episodes of all

the pervasities, abnormalities and damn-foolishness of sex. There is an under-current of extreme sensuality throughout the book, and once the trick of transposing the key is mastered, one can dip into this tepid stream on every page."

Previous to this comment, no one had remarked on anything but the book's value as literature. No one had complained of it being an obscene publication. Naturally, Mr Kingsley's letter changed things. Within a week, "the merry game of discovering the 'key' to Jurgen was well under way and a pleasant, rather heated controversy had begun." Someone, in the end, sent a clipping of the first letter to John S Sumner, secretary of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, and bleated: "Do your duty, Mr Sumner." Mr Sumner procured a warrant, and seized the plates and all copies of the book. The case is taken to court, where Mr Sumner presents his complaint, and gives a list of particularly lewd and obscene pages. There are 83 of these luscious, drool-worthy pages, enough to make any regular reader of the Olympia Press publications faunch for the book. After two and a half years, absolutely ruinous to a publisher still wanting to sell its book and make a profit, the case is heard, the defendants move for a verticot of acquittal. The trial was adjourned for three days - presumably for the judge to read the book his self - after which he rendered his decision and directed the jury to bring in a verdict of acquittal.

(the brief)

The main body of the book/follows. It is subdivied into several chapters, the headings to which summarise their content:

- I. The question presented is one of law, which the court should decide.
 - II. The test is the literary as distinct from the pornographic.
 - III. In applying this test, all reasonable doubt should be resolved in favor of the book.
 - IV. In judging the book by the standards above indicated, it must be read as a whole, and, on that basis, it must be upheld even though it may contain portions which would not stand the test if isolated.
- ((Up to this point, the chapters themselves are merely presenting the previous legal decisions which make this course of action and this reasoning acceptable in law. It's fairly involved, and quotes a number of previous judgements, etc.))
- V. The book, read as a whole, sustains the test of the law.
 - VI. The passages, to which reference has been made in the complaint originally filed in Special Sessions, are not indecent. ((Our 83 pages contain 'em.))
 - VII. In conclusion.

Chapters five and six are the most interesting to us. Chapter five gives the most detailed description and analysis of Jurgen you are likely to find anywhere. I only wish I could give the gist of it here, but it would be impossible to do justice to the writing except by printing the whole damn thing. And it would be difficult to justify my action by reprinting a good third of the book as legal excerpting.

However, chapter six is a different proposition. Here I can take a few examples.:

- Page 61. - Reference to 'the Bed' is made. But for whom? The bride. A bridal bed is not obscene or lewd. Vide wedding march in "Lohengrin", and the relative chapters in Scott's "The Bride of Lammemuir".
- Page 63. - "Had wondered if he really were the first man for whom she had put a deceit upon her husband", etc. If this is obscene, then nearly all current fiction is, to say nothing of the classics, ancient or modern.
- Page 80. - Jurgen is talking about Guenevere to her father. "I can get justice done me anywhere, in all the bed chambers of the world." If this is lewd, then we should abolish Ophelia's mad song in Hamlet. Anyhow,

Jurgen goes on to say (same page) "I only meant in a manner of speaking, sir."

Pages 84-6. - Jurgen tells Yolande she must reward him by candle light, etc. This contains no description of any offensive act. There is nothing explicit.

Page 120 - Jurgen gets into the bedroom of the Bishop. "His eminence is not alone, but as both occupants of the apartment were asleep, Jurgen saw nothing unopiscopal". If we are to be literal, then let us observe that this passage does not say (a) that the other was a female; (b) that they were in bed together. Sterne's "Sentimental Journey" has passages much more explicit.

(Jurgen's sword comes under fire, description of it, along with his staff and lance, being suggested by Mr Sumner as obscene. But all it is is a mere sword, with the name Caliburn tagged onto it. The last paragraph strikes the keynote of the case for the defence:

And Mr Sumner finds obscenity of page 142. What do we find there? We find Jurgen kneeling before a crucifix!
and there let us leave the case.

And there we have it. Ridiculous, wasn't it?

One last thing. Way back in the earlier pages of this fanzine, I was talking about Cabell. I inferred that his current high standing in certain circles was due to the furor about this book. Here's what Guy Holt had to say on the matter:

"... There is a legend, indeed, that the author of Jurgen (and of a dozen other distinguished books) owes much of his present place in letters to the advertising which Mr Sumner involuntarily accorded him. But one may question that. An examination of the publisher's files seem to show that most of the expressions of admiration for Jurgen were repetitions of an enthusiasm expressed before the book's "suppression." And if the enthusiasm and the sympathy of Mr Cabell's admirers were hearteningly evident, the attacks of his detractors did not flag; and an inestimable number of persons, knowing Mr Cabell's work only through the recorded opinions of Messrs. Kingsley and Sumner, did certainly condemn him unread and, shuddering, barred their library doors against him... No, Mr Cabell owes no debt of thanks to the accusers of Jurgen."

Now that I've left myself with a space here, I'm wondering what to do with it. I could apologise for some bad duplicating, especially on the top and bottom lines of the pages. That, I think, would be a Good Thing. Don't worry about the bottom line of several of the pages being about a millimetre short of the edge of the paper. That is the last line of printing. If it doesn't connect up to the top line of the page following, it's due to my disjointed style. All you're missing, in fact, is a couple of numbers. What I'm missing, though, is another matter. Half the hair on my head, through alternately clawing it and that (obscenity - substitute any passage from Jurgen quoted above) duplicator.

I could also assure you that everything else will be all-right - no more pages will be damaged - but I won't. It wouldn't be safe.

I could promise you that, starting from page 22, there will be a new typo-face to clog up with your eye tracks. This isn't due to gay expenditure on my part, though, but as a result of my reading the last mailing at camp, and doing the comments on their machine.

I could say what will be in the next issue. There will be a short article by Sid Birchby on Christopher Blayre. I'm hoping for other articles. There might also be a letter column, if I get some letters and if I don't lose 'em.

M A I L I N G C O M M E N T S .

OFF TRAILS. It's always nice to see your name mentioned, even though your fond dreams of egoboo are rudely shattered by seeing that if you don't shell out 7/- by the time the mailing has aged thirty days, you'll be out. I noted this at the beginning of the month, and promptly forgot about it. I remember my only comment being a verbal "Bennett can perform an anatomical impossibility".

Soon after this, I inflicted myself upon Northern Ireland for a fortnight's holiday. On my last day in Ireland - Thursday 29th September - I decided to go to the pictures in the afternoon. A film about some slightly tarnished people was being shown which I'd been recommended, and so as not to miss so much as a single syllable of what turned out to be a remarkably stilted dialogue, I showed up ten minutes early. I don't know what I began thinking while I sat alone in the cinema waiting for the adverts to come on. It can't have been particularly pleasant as somehow or other, I suddenly remembered about the dues.

I tried to get out of the cinema. I explained my case in heart-broken English to the first official looking person I saw.

"You see, it's like this. I have to get this postal order off to a friend of mine in England. If it doesn't arrive by tomorrow, I'll be shot."

The woman - forty-ish with glasses, peaked cap, a peculiar machine round her waist and the figure of someone whose ^{and} corsets had defied the law of gravity and slipped up to her chest. - hummed a bit looked pretty sympathetic on the whole.

I smiled. "Oh, and can you tell us where the nearest post office is; so's I can get a postal order?"

She thought for a moment. "Just down the road, on your right." The road, by the way, was Upper Newtownards Road, but a good half mile removed from Oblique House.

"Will you stop me if I tried to return to watch the programme." This to assure her that I wasn't one of the Teds who make a habit of walking in for nothing through the back entrance to the toilet.

"Oh, I won't mind at all. I only just popped in to spend a penny. And now, if you'll excuse me, the bus is waiting."

The next person I tried looked as though he might have been the manager in better days. He wore an ear trumpet, and seemed to sway to the rhythm of the old-time piano accompaniment to Charlie Chaplin films.

Eventually, I got through to him. "It's these gosh-danged sound pictures. My hearing hasn't been the same since." he apologised.

He turned out to be the manager alright - my instinct for detecting members of the ruling class is unbeatable - an with some reluctance, allowed me to depart and return without having to pay a second time.

"I definitely didn't want to miss that film," I panted, after having made it to the post office, bought a postal order, scribbled a short note explaining things to Bennett, sealed the envelope, stamped it, and returned to the cinema in the fairly reasonable time of one minute twenty-four seconds.

"Oi." he said. "And it's the Irish Premiere showing, too," he added, proudly.

And he had a right to be proud, too. Chaplin's THE GOLD RUSH is a classic.

RANDOM Buckmasters. The cover is ATom at his best - and proving that the stencil is as good a medium for original artwork as any canvas, board or paper. Once the techniques have been mastered, there's no stopping one until the photographic quality of a recent illo. of Nikki in Apré is reached. The style is Finlay-ish, and makes me wonder what he'd do with a fanzine cover.

AMBLE. Mercer. For the past hour or so, while I was hacking out an earlier version of this page twenty-three, I've been trying to sort out some thoughts which at first I thought had been fully composed, but on beginning to transfer to stencil turned out to be an unfinished symphony. They were to do with mailing comments, as an intended continuation of your remarks on the subject. I'm not completely convinced that the points I made there were completely valid - but they seem, on re-reading them, an attempted justification of my dislike of a zine which consists of nothing but mailing comments.

It seems my strongest argument in favour of this dislike was subjective, and that I wrote it at first from an objective angle. In other words, I tried to make out that what I felt, you would all feel. This is what I said, for what it's worth:

"...a solid diet of mailing comments in an APA would be exactly the same as getting a fanzine consisting purely of comments on the last issue. This last issue may have been published several months ago. You will probably have forgotten what was in it - what was said - the way it was said. In OMPA, you are guaranteed a three month period between mailings. This is enough for any active fan who is receiving numerous publications to forget much of what was in the previous mailing. The time comes for him to read the next mailing, and when he comes to the various batches of mailing comments, it probably requires his wading with difficulty through several zines before he has re-orientated himself with the contents of that long-lost mailing. It will be a struggle to read them easily - they'll be hard to digest. Few writers possess the happy knack of producing mailing comments which can be read as units without the need to refer desperately back to the original material inspiring the keys of his typer. There'll be a tendency to skim the comments, and probably miss much of what was said."

The above paragraph applies to yours truly. I wonder if it applies to anyone else in OMPA, or am I a misfit?

I don't think so, when I see so often the comment: "No Comment" placed against the title of a zine. It doesn't require much effort on the part of my admittedly cock-eyed imagination to visualise twenty zines in OMPA all 100 percent mailing comments, having run out of comments on the comments, having run everything into the ground, and forced to repeat, every time: "No Comment."

These are merely a few stray thoughts, and I hope they'll be treated as such. I'm beginning to realise that the subject of mailing comments needs a far fuller treatment. Analysing them would form a good research project for an advanced degree in Literature - they must be unique in literature.

GRIFFIN. Spencer. Here's a fanzine which I said to myself on starting it: "I will find plenty to comment on here." I found, however, as I went through what turned out to be my favourite OMPazine this time, that there was very little to comment on. It's almost an ideal OMPazine, to the degree limited by its format - columnising on every subject under the sun in a highly readable style. But commenting - ugh!

Your experiences with the vagaries of the Post Office point out to me the fundamental similarity between the American and the English species. The average post office clerk in historic old England seems to have little idea of his job. Some day, he'll be challenged on this very point. I wouldn't be surprised if he admits - after consultation with the nearest Trade Union representative, of course - that he is only trained in placing the "POSITION CLOSED" notice in the appropriate place as soon as he sees a customer coming. At least one servant of the public is still under the impression that you can't register book post parcels. Another one....

Another London fan-ed - Mike Moorcock, I believe - wanted to send off some copies

of his current brain-child to fandom at large. You know that the usual fannish way for sending fanzines in envelopes is to stick 'em inside and tuck the flap in? The post office Mike took them to would have none of this. They insisted that he use the official little metal fasteners. Obliging as always, Mike complied with this requirement, but made the fatal mistake of taking the envelopes to another post-office. Naturally, they decided the metal things made it letter post, and, therefore, to be sent at letter-rate...

Maybe that second post office belonged to another country...

Beautiful duplication, a fine cover - I'm sorry to hear GRIFFIN will be a long time to come this way again.

CYRRILLE. Evans. From page 12, quite out of context, I lift the phrase: "before the war". Translating English money into American gives me no trouble. Deciding that suspenders are the same as our braces was probably the first decision I ever made in my life. Equating elevators with lifts was the second. But one single phrase "before the war" makes me think carefully and carefully and carefully...

Before which war?

The American or the English World War II?

We in England reckon the Golden Age of Astounding was during the early war years. I.e., 1940 to 1942. The Americans refer to those fabulous issues where Heinlein filled the pages as completely as Silverberg does nowadays as pre-war issues. And when I come across an American fan raving over pre-war Astoundings, I immediately think of SaMoskowitz and Senses of Wonder before realising that it is the early forties he's referring to.

At least, though, the war stopped the same day for us both. It's the Germans and Japanese who have it complicated, with VE and VJ days. I can see a Japanese ordering a post-war Astounding from a German and then suing him because he gets a war-time issue.

BURGESS'S LIGHTS. Burgess. The reprinted material I found was very interesting.

The first article, by Moskowitz, I couldn't think up anything to say, but John Burke's reply brought up one or two points, which, combined with Mike Rosenblum's remarks, make me suggest that British fandom has developed in some respects, but not in others.

I get the impression that before the war, methods of obtaining zines were limited to subscriptions. Trading did not seem to be as acceptable as it is, generally speaking, today. And obtaining zines in exchange for a letter of comment - and not necessarily a letter in every issue - seems to have been unheard-of.

Yet America still seems to have the multitude of fourth-rate fanzines, whereas England rarely produces a very bad zine. American fans are generally teenagers. English fans are older.

Brian - you mentioned more than once having in mind the project of bringing this series of articles, all reprinted from New Worlds fanzine, up to date. You have a wonderful subject - and I hope you can get those articles bringing it up to date, and comparing the two periods.

paraFANalia. Burns. I must start sorting through the wads of old stories I scribbled in the days when I didn't have OMFA on which to dump my literary endeavours. The first story I ever wrote was in an old exercise book - and, oddly enough - so was the last. This last was the one I was telling you about near the beginning of this Eye Tracks. But back to the first. Indoubt if I could find it now - and it may never have been finished. This usually happened to my stories. They star-

ted on a wave on enthusiasm and petered out in an eddy of disinterest and weariness. This one, I'm sure, complied with - or, as it was the first, set - the general pattern. It was written when I lived at Crawly, currently a new town half way between London and Brighton. I was only a kid at the time - the same age as you, Bruce - and it was during a trip to Brighton on my bike that I dreamed up this heroic tale of science-fiction. It had a volcano off the end of Brighton Pier, which I called, with remarkable originality, Brighton Rock, plenty of villains, who spent most of their time chasing the hero (me) about in the latest and most up-to-date armoured bicycles. (I fancied myself as a speed-king at the time, and wrote some memorable - so I thought at the time - sequences making the thrills of a Grand Prix look like butterfly hunting on a summer's day.) I think there were some pretty decent pre-historic monsters floating about. Apart from that, I'm pleased to be able to say that I remember nothing further.

Wish you'd finish that serial off, preferably in one issue. Even pro-mags sometimes fold in the middle of a serial, how, as you can guess, I'm a little afraid there is a minute possibility a fanzine might do the same.

PHENOTYPE. Eney. Interesting convention report - but not another serial??? The Laney article puzzles me by its presence. When over at John Berry's a few weeks ago, I was fortunate enough to be able to get some SAPSzines off him. Amongst these was a recent SPACEWARP with this selfsame article in it. I'm possibly the individual who worries least about things, just takes them at their face value, but finding this here, really puzzled me. It's an excellent idea, though, whatever the reason, and I'm glad to see it in OMTA.

This seems to be about the end of a rather truncated list of zines commented on. I'm sorry so many of you have looked in vain for your egoboo here, but I don't seem to have got the hang of the commenting business yet - and there I was talking about the subject as though I was the oldest hack in the business! The rest of the mailing I enjoyed very much, and was appreciated a lot more than the impression these few mailing comments gives.

There's a fairly good chance of another issue in the next mailing. And that's about all, except to apologise for the lousy duplicating, and hope it won't happen again.

On the back page, I've given a list of the first lines of each page. That should help in translating the ink smudges.

By the way, Lady Chatterly's Lover is grabbing a couple of pages everyday in the big newspapers over here. If the result of the trial is announced before next Saturday, when I run these last few pages off, I'll insert it here. The evidence for the defence appears quite strong.

After the jury spent a good number of extremely fascinating hours reading Lady Chat in the seclusion of the jury room, and a large number of 'expert witnesses' (which included the like of bishops - HE'S in trouble with the arch bishop, by the way, for saying that every Christian should read the book - school teachers, etc) gave evidence for the defence. The prosecution hardly said a word. The upshot was that Lady Chat won it case - thus paving the way, incidently, to the final acceptance of such benned books as TROPIC OF CANCER and TROPIC OF CAPRICORN. Meenwhile, I'm off the Charing Cross Road to pick up a copy...

I N D E X T O F I R S T L I N E S .

P.2: EYETRACKS Number 2, Summer 1960. Produced and misdirected for the September
3: serious trouble. For that reason, none of you are to ask us where
4: there was more. Lots more." I decided that the lads had had long enough, now.
5: provided that our kit was ready for the Monday inspection. One or two of us were
6: smell. A very hospitably smell - and very familiar to me, though for the moment
7: The nature of the particular anaesthetic he had decided to get his kicks from -
8: was sleeping quite peacefully: no trouble from him. I found, the work finished,
9: other novel published the same time and in the same format. Fortunately, though,
10: good copy of the first British edition of Verne's FROM THE EARTH TO THE MOON. This
11: if you just want to read a fantasy story, it's best to leave such cases alone, but
12: control of my destiny, I shall only be serving eighteen months. But don't tell the
13. Their science-fantasy - which, being generally of a sensational nature, the publ-
14: the average. Mills and Boon - almost hundred percent love romances - but with the
15: his frustrated, bullied and brow-beaten employees - several of whom are sent down
16: Locke here again. I managed to dig up an extra copy of The Confectioners. If any-
17: the same as the first. It's the last two that interest us - or, at least, inter-
18: that fair land to the ground, and the setting up of the World's Pleasance in its
19: interested, say so in your letter of comment, and I'll dig the information up for
20: /perversities, abnormalities and damn-foolishness of sex. There is an under-cur-
21: Jurgen goes on to say (same page) "I only meant it in a manner of
22: speaking,

M A I L I N G C O M M E N T S .

23: AMBLE. Mercer. For the past hour or so, while I was hacking out an earlier version
24: of his current brain child to fandom at large. You know that the usual fannish way
25: ted on a wave of enthusiasm and petered out in a saddy of disinterest and wearin-
26: ess.

26: I N D E X T O F I R S T L I N E S .