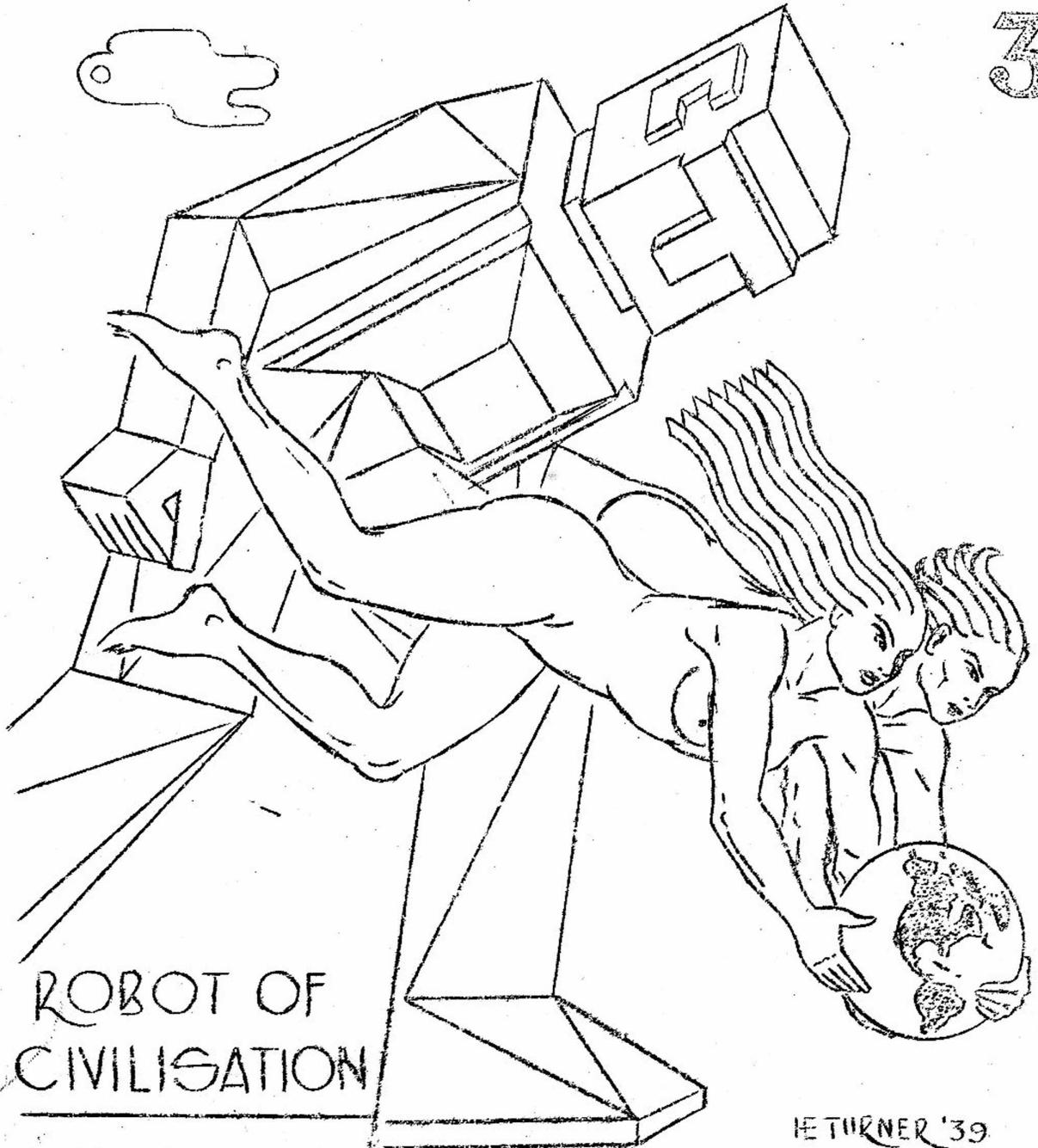


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ROBOT OF  
CIVILISATION

H. TURNER '39

The magazine for the intelligent fan  
Circulation practically negligible!

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FANTAST'S (CONTINUED) FOLLY

'cos he was hurriedly requested for said article or because he wanted to write something and was at loss for what to say.++++

'Nother answer to "On Conversation" - and keep sitting on it!"

O. Robb--"As one artist to another I am delighted to receive your hints, Mr. Turner, and freely admit that my work leaves much to be desired. I regret that school business and the fact that art is not my chosen career combine to render attendance at life-classes impracticable, but I shall endeavour to improve my figure-work. For your information, Mr. Smith I am not related to Miss Olive Robb. Whatever a "suspicious quality of writing" may be (I question the sense if not the grammar of this) you show it both in your article and your letter. Here I must desist, or I might find myself prostrate before your altar -- a sight to cheer your declining years."

107 Montgomery Street, Edinburgh.

And many, many more!

By

Eric S. Williams

A Tale of Defeat  
and Death!

## HORIZON



I rested for a moment from the effort of clambering over the rusted girder-work protruding from the river bed, and looked up the deep mud-trough in the general direction of St. Paul's. That was gone, too. All the old familiar landmarks on the south side of the River I had missed, and now the one thing I was certain that I would find -- obliterated. Through the bluish miasm that clung like a miserable ghost over this treacherous channel of mud and sand, I could see for mile after misty mile over an endless sea of domes and cubes. The architecture of London, instead of rising as anticipated, had flattened and spread like an enormous pancake. The spire had vanished completely from this vast flatness of architecture, even from the churches if there were any; the chimney, a vanishing thing in my own times -- gone -- leaving an unbroken level of bald domes and cubes, all a dull yellow, endlessly so.

Nothing could be learned from this view-point -- the mystery of why this city had sunk from the level of the world's heart and brain to that of a dead organism could not be solved by speculation in the middle of its rotting artery; it needed actual examination of the buildings and records.

I completed the crossing of the once bright bridge, and left its shattered surface for that of a wide, grassy avenue following the curve of the river. This was the Embankment -- planted with trees and lawns, dotted with fountain basins, shady benches and small shelters; once a beautiful stretch of imaginative gardening, now a tangle of unrestrained vegetation lush with that madness that comes to plants freed from the bonds of constant cultivation. I turned about without attempting to penetrate this jungle and considered the building that crouched along the brink of the mud channel that had once proudly borne the name of Thames. Only by a great effort could I connect this uninspiring building with the Houses of Parliament that filled this site two thousand years in the past. In truth, the building did exhibit a slightly more enterprising variety of shapes throughout its colossal length, but these, executed as they were in the same stained yellow stone, and absolutely unbroken by any form of window, gave only the impression of coarseness and strength like the lumpiness of a hippopotamus.

Beautiful buildings in this city were there none. The taste of the last designers of this oft redesigned city seemed to have aspired towards ultimate simplicity and solidness. It seemed fantastic to think that the slender, uplifting tower had been discarded; that the sweep of the disc and conic section had vanished; that beauty had been reduced to hemispheres and cubes. But as I trod the deserted avenues that starred this silent metropolis, I found nothing to relieve the monotony of unimaginative forms.

The site of Trafalgar Square was a huge circle of lank grass, dotted with a maze of short monoliths. I wandered for some time amongst these stone columns, endeavouring to grasp their sig-

nificance, examining again and again their pitted surfaces in the chance of discovering any markings of an intelligent nature.

These columns dotted apparently haphazardly about the great circle intrigued me. Here lay a clue to the mentality of the people who had left this city to rot. What did these columns denote? What was their use in the absence of any markings that one might have expected to find on monuments? Why were they not arranged in lines or circles? Why this disorder that clashed with the fantastic simplicity of everything else in this city? It was impossible to arrive at a sane decision.

On and on through the straight lines of buildings I wandered, sometimes entering into one of the empty shells along the way to survey its blank interior. Every cube or hemisphere I entered disclosed the same bareness of detail. London had become a great area of echoing, dim-lit boxes; deserted - forgotten by Mankind - a "ghost town" of skeleton frames.

As I rambled on through the same silent, depressing scenes, changing only in their arrangement of lone to cube, I grew more hopeless of finding way London had died. The jangling, roaring, furiously busy town that I had known, had vanished as a puff of smoke, and in its place was this dreary, colossal disease of geometrical shells. How? In what way could Mankind have done this to itself? To me it seemed like mass madness that they should pull down every quaint building, every inch of the cosmopolitan architecture that I called my London, and erect this endless boredom of exaggerated simplicity. I felt tempted to flee back to my own times; yet the mystery of it held me.

Subconsciously my feet had guided me always in one direction, north-west from Trafalgar to the British Museum. Nothing could have told me that here was the British Museum - only my subconscious mind. This hive of domes clustered like a yellow mask before me had none of that tranquil, dignified air that distinguished the British Museum and its neighbourhood. Indeed, I was puzzled at the inner motives that had led me to this spot. What could I expect to find in these wind-blown chambers but dust?

The sole moving thing in all London, I entered the first vacant dome and peered about in the dimness for I knew not what. The flat concrete floor of the ancient warehouse was bare. And so the next section. One, two, three, four whispering vaults I passed through in my hopeless search. Hollow cubes and hemi-spheres of chilly darkness, resounding away from room to room with my dragging footsteps; brooding over this intrusion into black depths that had lain undisturbed by Man's foot for an age; crouching in dull anger at my temerity.

And so -- the final scene, in the flickering light of a match, standing before a gigantic black marble statue, set beneath the dome of what was probably the largest building in the city.

The thing reared fifty feet above me. Taloned wings stretched far forwards, as though in the act of striking down to death; mighty claws gripping the pedestal on which it stood; jagged, curving beak hanging like a poised sword. It was a mixture of all that is fierce in the bird - teeth, claw, beak, bony wing structure -- and this stood there, graven in a position of defiance and intelligence! This, I knew, was the explanation.

Slowly I drew near to the base of the statue and, using another match, peered closely at the streaked marble. It was pitted over every square inch with holes of varying sizes, scattered in confusion. At the very bottom, set against the floor, were those words: WE HAVE CONQUERED, AND WE HAVE NO MERCY.

Aghast I stood at those words so pregnant with meaning. Fool that I was not to have read the rifle sooner, when every sign pointed to the solution! WE HAVE CONQUERED . . . . and, perhaps, now at last Mankind knew peace - the peace of death. As I raced over the rotting bridge and saw before me the tiny shape of the time-scanner I was weeping blindly.

BY

ERIC C WILLIAMS

TWO POEMS  
by Harold Gottliffe

PARADES FOR MURDER

The woods shine brightly brown and green  
The hills slope down to meet the sun,  
The air smells sweet and new and clean,  
Without a hint of . . . . what may be.  
The river runs with gleaming foam  
Between the rocks so sharp and clear,  
In flight above the birds still roar -  
No hint as yet of what is near.

The day is dim, and night rides on,  
The woods reach talons harsh and keen;  
The air is fetid - hope is gone,  
No shirking now all that has been!  
For once this river ran with blood,  
And once these rocks were altars crude.  
You say "This was before the Flood",  
But . . . . . what if I am in the mood?

"No more we'll sing"

No more we'll sing -

for who could fill with praise  
Or joy, or gladness the resounding air?  
All this belongs to the unselfish days  
Of savage hearts and nights untouched by care.  
Those days are gone, and in their place we find  
-- selfish and civilized and racked with pain --  
The Era of the Ruled and Ordered Mind;  
And long within her grave lies Saki Iain.  
A long succession of uneasy days,  
Mechanical and Useful, form a ring  
Round which we march in tuncless prison way.  
The rhythm of our steps?

"No more we'll sing".

"THINGS ARE NOT WHAT THEY SEEM"

That tree looks so natural and homely now, just as it did yesterday afternoon when the sun was shining on it. It has stood there on the far side of the lawn for generations; I can remember playing under it when I was a kiddy, and last month I spent many a sunny Sunday afternoon in a deck-chair under the shade of its leaves. Yet, after last night, I wonder if it is all it seems to be.

I'd just been down the road to the post -- it was about 11 o'clock and I'd missed the late evening collection; still, I wanted the letter delivered for the next afternoon -- so I didn't grudge the walk. Besides, there wasn't much moon, and I like -- or rather liked -- a walk in the dark.

As soon as I stopped off the road, and closed the garden gate after me, I felt there was something queer happening; it was just as though I had walked into a strange garden, and in closing the gate had cut myself off from every thing I knew. I shivered, and, blaming the cold meat we'd had for dinner, hurried along the path. Still, it was decidedly queer.

The path curves round from the gate and skirts the edge of the lawn, so I thought I'd cut across the grass and save a few minutes. Consequently, I stepped off the gravel into the belt of trees which hides the house from the road. I couldn't have gone two paces when I felt something tap me on the shoulder; thinking that it was my brother or someone, I turned round, but there was no-one in sight. I shrugged my shoulders, cursed myself for being a nervy fool, and went on. A minute later it happened again.

I didn't look back this time (I dare not) but hurried on towards the haven that the lawn seemed to offer; it was then that I felt that someone was following me. I ran as fast as my legs would carry me for that little patch of light which was the hall window -- so far away -- praying to the gods I'd forgotten since I was a child. There was a rustling sound behind me, and the faster I ran, the nearer it seemed to come; I ran on and on, until, halfway across the lawn, I tripped over something. In that fraction of time taken by my fall, I had time to take in the whole scene -- you know how it is. Looking up, I saw a great figure towering -- or so it seemed -- up to the very sky; I felt something hard under my hand and realised that it was the spade with which I had been working on the flower bed. With the madness born of utter despair, my hand closed over it, and as I felt something grip my shoulder, I buried the knife-edged tool as hard as I could towards the apparition. The grip relaxed, and a few minutes later I was pouring myself a drink in the safety of the house.

Next morning -- that is, today -- I went out after breakfast to see whether I'd had a nightmare, or whether the whole thing had really happened; there was no sign of the horror of the previous night, only a spade on the lawn, and a gash high up on the tree trunk on the side away from the house.

As I look out of the window now, the children are playing amongst the roots that arch out of the ground, and the sun is sinking behind the trees over the road. I think I'd better call them in; after all, it's near their bedtime. And you can never be too careful.

BY HAROLD GOTTLIFFE

REVIEW

EDITORIAL NOTE -- There has been much misunderstanding about the Composite Criticism scheme outlined in our last issue, so we think it wise to begin with the AUGUST issue of AS-F (2 months before the new Smith serial begins). Criticisms should be in by the 15th of the month, which leaves plenty of time for reading. Remember, Smith takes the first story in the magazine, and the rest follow on. Meanwhile, here is a Smith review of the JUNE Astounding.

Ratings:- Very good, good, fairly good, very fair, fair, readable, poor.

HERMIT OF MARS by Clifford D. Simak.

Competently written, with a certain reality in the picture of Martian surroundings and a neatly finished plot. There is more than an element of weird in the plot and the laconic style is unfortunately hardly suitable.

FAIRLY GOOD.

WHEN THE FUTURE DIES by Nathan Schachner.

Although written as far as possible entirely in clichés the idea is novel and interesting.

FAIR.

THE MORONS by Hari Vincent.

Another idea that catches the imagination, and the style possesses a certain crude vitality. A re-reading of "Three Thousand Years!" will demonstrate the flaws in the idea of making advanced products with crude tools. I close my eyes to the logical side of the plot in rating this.....FAIRLY GOOD.

PRESSURE by Ross Rocklynne.

This is a remarkably good example of short story writing, and demonstrates an interesting idea.

GOOD.

DONE IN OIL by Arthur J. Burks.

The worst yet of the McNab abominations, notable for a complete lack of credibility in the chief characters.

POOR.

ONE AGAINST THE LEGION by Jack Williamson.

On this last instalment rested the fate of the whole, for the preceding instalments were undoubtedly rather shaky. It succeeds in gathering up the threads of the plot neatly, and in spite of the usual rather toy-shop atmosphere the whole is.....

FAIRLY GOOD.

DESIGN FOR LIFE by L. Sprague de Camp.

Whether the facts were new to one or not the article is a very interesting piece of reasoning.

GOOD.

THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY FABLESby John F. Burke1. THE AUTHOR AND THE IDEA

Not a thought had he got - not a single idea,  
 And he felt so confoundedly worried;  
 He must soon write a story, or out on his ear  
 In the gutter he knew he'd be hurried.

He sat in his study one cold wintry night,  
 Trying madly to think of a plot.  
 He sat in the dark, then he turned on the light;  
 Did he get an idea? He did not.

The editor was waiting for something to come,  
 The author began sweating blood;  
 There must be some plots left - he knew there were some  
 Not used yet - and find one he would!

"If Binder can do it, then I can!" he said,  
 "You'll see me a big millionaire,  
 Writing tripe by the yard till the day I am dead" -  
 'Twas then that he read Thornton Ayre.

It was 'Webwork' he'd heard of - a strange sort of yarn;  
 Thornton Ayre had shown how it was done:  
 Take an old hackneyed plot with a smell like a barn,  
 Then transfer to a planet or sun.

A couple of monsters - a strange asteroid;  
 A mad scientist's beautiful daughter;  
 Write technical things about "cold, blasted void",  
 And you'll earn a lot more than you oughter.

So our author gave vent to a dounce of a shout,  
 And having smoked several cigars,  
 Took about half-an-hour to write the thing out,  
 And gave us "The Prisoner of Mars".

The moral of this story is surely quite plain -  
 If you're hoping to make a big name,  
 Why chase new ideas - don't harass your brain;  
 Use the old ones - it's all in the game!

REVIEW . . . . . continued.  
 PANDORA'S ICE-BOX by . . . . .  
 An interesting account of low temperature work . . . . . GOOD  
 COVER -- at least a cover one is not ashamed to be seen with. . . . . GOOD  
 INTERIOR ILLUSTRATIONS -- Wesbo seems to know best what to illustrate . . . . . FAIR

( OCEANA )

They say that the Sea has many emotions, that at times it is peaceful and at others angry and furious, and that it has all the subtle nuances of emotion in between. So say sailormen who have lived many years in dependence on its whims and who think they have come to know this vast, uneasy creature that sprawls round our planet. Yet they are wrong as anyone may hear who comes to sit on the seashore and listen to the chattering of the ripples among the rocks, the slow tumultuous words spoken along sandy beaches and the deep, crashing consonants of the storm-waves against the cliffs. Through all that endless monologue and all these manifold tones runs the same keynote, laughter. Chuckles from the cob and guffaws from the brooking swell on the shingle. The Sea is laughing still at the joke that began fifteen hundred million years ago in the steamy surge of its archaic bosom, that burlesque we call life. And it is laughing most of all at that particular form of life we call Man.

It happened one night that my mind shook off the shackles of flesh and wandered free across the planet. It came to rest on a steam-ship ploughing steadily through the water under a tropical sun and for a time I stood beside the captain on his bridge. He turned suddenly and passed unhurriedly down the stairs, and the helmsman followed him. I knew at once where they were going and I followed too. All around the entire crew were hurrying to the side of the ship, the same thought in all minds. Over the side they went, and I, pausing as I remembered the absence of my material body, saw their bodies break the surface of the calm ocean and continue falling with undiminished velocity into the dim depths below. Then suddenly I was awake and troubling in my bed thousands of miles away.

For I knew now what had happened to the "Mary Celeste" and to other ships whose crews had mysteriously vanished. The Sea had called them and they had answered its call, eagerly entering its crushing embrace. Down they had been dragged to the gloomy depths and, by the terror that gripped me as I found myself saved, I knew that the pressure of the enormous soul of the Sea crushed the frail human spirits as surely as their bodies were pulped by the enormous pressure of the sea-bottom to which they fell so swiftly and so unnaturally.

So I know why the Sea is always laughing and laughing at the ignorant pride of Man. Mother of all life on the planet, a vastly huge and vastly ancient joker by whose sufferance we live, and who awaits the day when Man shall proudly claim the mastery of the Universe. On that day will the Sea make the second great joke and all living things, all men, shall come hurrying to cast themselves into the ocean and have life crushed out of body and soul alike in the remorseless depths. Then will the Sea lie peacefully, smiling and chuckling to itself in the silence of a dead world, until the conquering cold immobilises it at the end of Time.

THE NECRONOMICRON CHAPTER FIVE

By One who Must be Nameless

The other day, I bought the "Necronomicron" at a bookstore. Yes, I mean it. I meant to ask for "Weird Tales", but I was thinking of something else, and absent-mindedly said "Necronomicron, please"....and the man handed it over without a blink.

I trottered off home and placed the book carefully on the table, then stood well back and looked at it. I don't really know what I expected to happen, but I certainly didn't imagine it would just stay still and do nothing -- I rather anticipated a frantic leaping about, or an "odour of ghastly putrefaction". However, it didn't do anything, and it smelt no worse than any other book that's been lying on a station bookstall for a century or so.

I opened it at random, and looked rather fearfully at it. Now that it was open, the stench was a bit horrible, but that may have been the corpses of a few thousand dead bookworms that fell out all over the floor. They frightened me for a moment - I thought they were "things from beyond" or something.

Someone knocked at the door at that moment, causing me to fall dead with fright. Fortunately I remembered the famous "Imprecation of Malygeis", and, uttering it in a low (and a low) voice, I was brought back to life just before I hit the carpet.

I opened the door, and told the maid I wasn't in. She looked into the room and said "That's funny - I was sure I heard someone in here" and went back again, catching my fingers in the door as she shut it. I uttered another ancient curse - one that has been handed down from father to son since it was first invented by Harold when the arrow hit him in the eye.

The closing of the door stopped a terrific draught that had been set up from the open window, and after brushing down my beautiful wavy hair (if you think this article's written by Dave McIlwain, you're mistaken) I returned to the table, to find... the page I had been reading had been turned over! Most people would have put that down to the wind, but I was not so foolish -- I knew that I was being told that I must not read that page. With a little tremor of fear, but with determination in my heart, I turned back the page.

The chapter I read set out in full some really terrific spells. I came across one on how to dematerialise oneself, but it needed a large cauldron and the blood of a new-born babe. I could have used the coal-scuttle or my old tin bath, but the new-born babe was a different matter. Being a bachelor, I had no access to such a creature.

Sighing mournfully, I went on. At last I reached a page with a peculiar stain on it. It looked as though someone had been reading it at the breakfast table and spilt some soup, but such a mundane explanation could not be countenanced for a moment; it was probably dried blood.

On that page was a spell of destruction that seemed worth trying.

"Raise the left foot in the air" directed the book. I got up, holding the massive tome in one hand, and balancing on the foot near the fireplace, read on. I described a mystic circle in the air, muttering an ancient curse (a pretty strong one, believe me) at the same time. "Raise the right foot in the air" said the book, "And destruction will be achieved".

It was.

I fell on the fire-irons, tearing my shirt, knocked the clock off the mantelpiece as I went, and dropped the unhallowed book in the fire, where it commenced to burn.

Extricating one hand from under the fender, I retrieved the book, and extinguished the flames by jumping on the thing - this also relieved my feelings.

Opening the book again in my feverish search for dread knowledge, I came across a spell for raising the devil. It was a bit easier than usual -- just a little human blood, a human ear, and a picture of Harry Roy. I went out and killed the maid, and got a picture of Harry Roy from the "Daily Depress".

Then, making a deep bow and muttering the invocation, I said: "Now, you devil, appear".

At this moment there was a knock on the door. It was only the man who calls for the empties, but how was I to know that? With a wild shriek, as the full import of my folly dawned on me, I fell dead to the floor.

Did you get that? Go back and read it again. Don't you realize what it means -- what it implies? It means that the fellow who's writing this is dead....

You're not horrified in the least?

Maybe I'm not such a good writer as Lovecraft, after all.

---

### FANOPOLIS III

#### "Digression in A Flat"

The patriarch took hold of the Neophyte's arm and led the way through the assembly-room to a door on the other side. As he opened it he turned, smiling, and said,

"You, I understand, are Ishmael Neophyte. Allow me to introduce myself - I am Hugo Gernsback, generally and irreverently known as Uncle Hugo. For my sins I have the task of conducting newcomers around Fanopolis. You see, I founded Fanopolis."

"A remarkable achievement!" said the Neophyte warmly, "I congratulate you."

There was a far-away, reminiscent look on Uncle Hugo's face. "Yes," he said softly, "we pioneers made a good job of the foundations. It is up to the younger ones to top the towers."

They were silent a moment, gazing out across the tracery of bridge and building; then Gernsback spoke again.

"Have you decided whether you will live alone, or at the Flat?" he enquired.

"Flat?" The Neophyte was puzzled.

"Didn't Mepho tell you? Well, it's like this - Bill Pimple, Ego Narke and Boris Pantson thought it would be a good idea to live together and so inaugurated the state of Flatness. As newcomers came in they, too, decided to live in the Flat, whose size was conveniently increased by the obvious expedient of building more rooms onto it. Within a year there were twenty Fans in it.

And that wasn't all. When the state of Flatness first began, others also thought it a good idea but for various reasons refused to live in the original Flat. Daw started a Flat - which meant that Tykora had to start one too, until now Flat-dwelling indicates your adherence to one or the other of the Fan-creeds. A very few Fans live alone. Still, until you can sum up the various creeds it might be a good plan for you to have a Flat of your own. Later you can join up with whatever group you find you like best."

"Yes," murmured the Neophyte. "I should like to find my feet before I commit myself. You must know that all this is very bewildering to me -- I had heard dim reports of Fanopolis in the outer world but never imagined it was so ... so - well, "terrific" has lost all value as an adjective but it describes my reaction excellently."

"I know! I know! The tremendous steps fandom has taken sometimes causes even me to catch my breath. But you mustn't waste your time listening to the rambling of an old man; besides, Red will have told the others at the Flat of your arrival and they will want to meet you. Shall I call a car?"

"If it isn't very far, I think I'd like to walk."

"I'm glad to hear that", approved Uncle Hugo, "I distrust the way the younger generation is coming to depend so much on the cars - the Brain knows what it's doing when it causes these frequent break-downs. It is a great relief to know that the Brain is always there, so wise and considerate."

They set off at a brisk pace through the clean, wide streets of the city and within half an hour were at a junction of two avenues quaintly named "Lovecraft Lane" and "Schachner Street."

"Rather a mesalliance, is it not?" smiled the Neophyte, as they turned into a door in the corner building.

"Yes, indeed! There was a great commotion when it was first named. Beck, Barlow and the rest of the Lovecraft gang sat on their hind legs and howled about it being an insult to the memory of a genius, and, of course, Berke, Fantaspoot and Macinapain seized it as a glorious opportunity to kick up a fuss. But really the highbrows are very much in the minority in Fanopolis, and when the provincials threw in their votes for Schachner the decision was obvious."

"P - provincials?" panted the Neophyte, toiling up an unending flight of stairs (having stoutly refused the elevator).

"Didn't you know? By far the majority of fans are not permanent residents in Fanopolis but only visit. There is little intercourse between them and us and there have been movements to exclude them from the city altogether. I don't think they will ever come to anything, though. The magazines are all commercial,

(except fan magazines, of course) and so they are all for the provincials."

They had finally reached the top of the stairs and for some time had been conscious of the strains of music. As they topped the last step this broke out with redoubled vigour and, in quick succession, two other melodies made themselves heard.

"By Payment on Publication", cursed Hugo, "if we haven't arrived on a Music Night. What lousy luck!"

"Why? I rather like music, if it isn't too high-brow."

"Wait till you've suffered as many Music Nights as I have! Ego, Boris and Bill started it all by having the first Music Night -- they listen avidly to such stuff as that British guy's "Steel Foundry". Well, Earke and Macinpain had by this time taken up residence across the way, and, resentful as usual, decided to hold a Music Night of their own, in which they let fly with people like Venuti, and a person extraordinarily called "Pee-Tee Russell". B.R. Black and Fantaspoot were considerably annoyed by such specialisation and formed a third Music Night to enjoy everything from Beethoven to Bing Crosby. Unfortunately they all chose the same night and, being fanatically stubborn, have refused to change at all. Then a Music Night occurs all the other Flat-dwellers shut themselves up in soundless rooms. As the rooms are far from completely soundless they occasionally venture out to hurl curses at the music-lovers but the din soon drives them back."

"Dare we beard the lions?"

"Yes. Your arrival will be doubly welcome to the miserable non-musicians since it will mean the abandonment of the Music Night. Come on."

Resolutely they opened the door and, flinching a little before the caterwauling that assailed them made their appearance known by a loud "Oi!" Vulgar it may have been but it was effective. In the large assembly room Barke and Macinpain were listening to a gramophone emitting unrecognisable crashes and boop--a-dooping; Black and Fantaspoot were defiantly reading Astoundings to the tune of "Bolero" and away in the distance a small group were swaying in almost mystic ecstasy to Poldogger's 37th symphony in opus 158. The two former machines shut off at once, while from behind innumerable side-doors rose huge sighs of relief, but either through distance or absorption, Poldogger's 37th continued.

Simultaneously Black and his companion threw their Astoundings at the gramophone, and, as the record jarred to a halt, got up to greet the two arrivals. "Vendals!" howled Ego, "hydrocephalic Philistines!" Then he, too, noticed the newcomers and dropped the Astounding he was preparing to return violently to its original possessor. As if by magic doors opened on all sides and the Neophyte had his first experience of Fans in the bulk.

BY

FANTASTIC

### MIDSUMMER MADNESS

Reaction to the 3rd issue of "Fantast" has destroyed one of our most cherished beliefs - that Editorials are seldom read, and even less frequently enjoyed. Then, last month, we cut our

ramblings down to a few lines, we merely regretted that it was impossible further to curtail them. We were accordingly surprised more than somewhat when several readers protested against this. Our apologies and thanks.

Various things there are on which we would like your opinions. Would you care to see purely scientific articles in the magazine? Do you think verse out of place? How much fiction do you consider necessary? You have helped greatly with reactions in the past and I am confident that you will assist again.

Complaint has reached us of the number of non-de-plumes which have appeared in "Fantast". You will realize that this is not our fault and certainly not our wish. On your behalf we appeal to contributors to use their own names unless, in such a case as "Pantecytic", the pen-name cloaks a different character. If one writer has two or more articles in the same issue we are prepared frankly to acknowledge that fact.

You will have noticed a change of cover artists. This does not mean that we are dissatisfied with the work of Osmond/Robb whom we still consider ranks among the best amateur fan artists -- you like him too, as your comments have shown. We feel, however, that a little variety is welcome and also that Mr. Turner should give Osmond a chance to get his own back for that extensive criticism in the last "Folly".

There has been misunderstanding with regard to our request for lines of 65 spaces. Simply, you should set your margin stops at 5 and 70 (or 10 and 75) and type as an ordinary letter,++ but make the edges even by using some rare character to fill in++ the lines, as illustrated here. This enables us to transcribe+++ your material directly onto a stencil, without the labour of re+++ typing. The above, of course, applies only to contributors in+++ possession of typewriters.

Here follows the result of your voting - dare we call it "Franchise Folly"?

1st - "Fantast's Folly" (3.90). 2nd - "Fanopolis" (7.76)  
3rd - "How to Write Weird Poetry" (7.40). 4th - "An Appreciation"  
(7.10). 5th - Cover (7.00). 6th - "Dreamer 4" (6.60). 7th - "Mars  
and Venus" (6.50). 8th - "Conversation Piece" (6.50). 9th - "Answers  
to Correspondents" (5.90). 10th - Cartoon (4.83).

We offer our condolences to Smith, whose "Appreciation", after a close tussle with "Fanopolis", was lying first ("Folly", of course, excepted) when the voting seemed over. Wellswain, however, sent in very late comments and, giving Fic 10 and Smith 2¢ - even Burke gave him 5! - dropped "An Appreciation" into 3rd place, and, unconsciously, knocked his own article into 2nd. "How to Write Weird Poetry" started out very undistinguishedly but came to the front with 89 out of a possible 100, thanks to Forster, Turner, Hopkins and Robb. My "Dreamer" kept a fairly even tenour, collecting two 10s, until Mr. Kay produced the only 2 of the voting and knocked it into hyper-space. "Answers to Correspondents" (10 from Mr. Kay!) and the cartoon were the only features generally disliked. "Conversation Piece" suffered at the hands of the ungodly, but we think the 10 it got from Smith was worthy compensation. "Mars and Venus" was very average in reception, apart from

a contemptuous 3 from that knowable editor, John P. Burke. About "Fantast's Folly", of course, there can be no doubt. Only Hanson and Robb ventured to give as low a mark as 7, and most were generous with 10s. Again I wish to thank the eleven critics, hope they will continue, and wish them many companions in enfranchisement.

F A N T A S T S

F O L L Y

The conscription war still rages, it seems. Pursuant to our policy of printing hostile views in "Fantast", here follow comments from Mr. Kay:

"King's criticisms: From the way you arranged the contents page they all looked at "Diatribes from King's". Opinion can be divided into two classes, as expressed by Messrs. Rabinet and Grimby both referring to yourself as shown by your editorial note: Rabinet: "These people aren't worth bothering with, take it away." Grimby: "That kind of person ought to be taken out and put up against a wall and shot." ("Hear hear" from everyone around, including Mr. Rabinet.) And, we are led to presume, Mr. Kay?+++Now, Mr. Youd, while I feel there is much sense in Mr. Rabinet's advice, I will trouble with you for a little while. Firstly, what conceit led you to publish the paragraph with which I dismiss your effort and leave out the parts of the letter of interest to other people? To have answered Mr. Kay personally on all points, but wish also to justify ourselves to our readers. Our reason for this action was because Mr. Kay's remarks on conscription merely echoed the article "On Conscription", while his condemnation of "Dreamer 4" was a definite, and valuable, criticism of the magazine. While I am prepared to defend my opinions with anything from a pen to a Bren gun I am not going to do so in the Fantast if you suppress half my remarks.+++At the Convention I gave you no reason to say that I consider Fearn a better stylist than Taine. For one thing we never mentioned style, and for another we never mentioned Taine. (That is one sentence you will not publish). As a matter of fact I have only read 'Twelve Eighty Seven' and 'Tomorrow' by Taine, so I am not in a position to judge. Will J.P. Burke or E.C. Williams please confirm that Mr. Kay called Fearn a good author and Taine on the stories of his he had read, a poor one? To admit Mr. Kay generously offered to suspend judgement on the letter until he had read more by him.+++As the forgoing sic may have informed you, I don't care a damn who you are, editor or not, if you ask for it you are going to get it, and you have two remedies: 1. don't ask for it, 2. refuse to have anything more to do with me.+++By the way, I suggest that you read your letters more carefully. I distinctly stated that the article was by myself, but it expressed the opinion of King's, noticeably 7 of Mr. Grimby, your anonymous student. Quote original letter: "Students, particularly Medical students, are accustomed to looking life in the face. They deal in facts, not pious hopes...So you see, we dislike fools like your correspondents. One friend of mine wrote a letter which I

have not dared to forward in the original.+++On second thoughts I will write that on a second sheet, and you can use it as an article if you feel like it.7+++The person with a 'penchant for Kipling' then, is myself.+++With regard to your editorial note: You do not seem to realise that it is the pacifist, the non-resistance person who causes war. Your militarist is the World Statesman not the pacifist. The world state will come, most certainly, but due to one fact only -- you and your like will not get charge of the government. May we respectfully point out that militarism has been the order of the day since Egypt. Where, oh where, is the World State? It will come when the world is dominated by a few nations, perhaps three or four, and some of those decide that a union would be to their advantage. If they have such power that the others cannot defeat them, then the World State will come. Probably peacefully. But it will mean several wars first. Shu, Foo or Aspidochelone have pity on us! Can you understand it?+++I am glad to note that you admit you do not write poetry, perhaps you will next be honest enough to admit that you are not a judge of it? It is a proud man who claims to write poetry -- but a pretaster generally recommends his superiors more than -- say -- a Medical Student would -- recommend you to the quintessence of poetry - The Dying Patriot by James Elroy Flecker. I do humbly disagree Perhaps you can pretend that that is pacifistic. How about the famous extract from Lockesley Hall, is that pacifistic? Quote: "Till the war-drum throbs no longer and the battle flags are furled, In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world." - decide for yourself.+++Perhaps, though, you don't know the poems, or do you consider that Flecker and Tennyson are more suitable to the intelligence of the Daily Mirror than your august Fantast? "August" is the word for Fay! -- but this is the July issue. All right, skip it!+++Might I call your attention to another little bit of Latin: veritas odium parit For the benefit of non-classicists - "truth breeds hate" - so do lies+++P.S. Please resist the temptation to say that I asked you to publish a three page letter, because I do not, all I want is this page, and an explanation about Taine published. P.P.S. I finished the foregoing, signed it, went down to tea, and found your letter on the table. Now, when I stated my opinions as above, I had formed rather a poor opinion of you. The courtesy of the letter, however, has rather softened my opinion, so that, while I retain the views, I retract the insults. Wethankyou

H. Kay

321 Brownhill Road, Catford, S.E.6.

Without preamble, the opinions of the editor of what was one of the first and best amateur fantasy publications -- Maurice K. Hanson.

"The cover is poor. I would like to see covers like Eric Williams' "The Last Militarist -- Thank God!" one for H.T., and ones no less inferior. So would we!+++ "The Introvert" was based on a very nice idea, original so far as I know, but it wouldn't be surprising to learn that Wells used it in one of his short stories. It also has a marked similarity to part of the Swiss film "Die Ewigkeitsmaske" ("The Eternal Mask") in which one sees a character wandering through the tortuous tunnels of his own subconscious mind.

but the story was only a beginning; nothing worth mentioning was done; so much good material and so many opportunities wasted. Why didn't the author relate some of the irrational, unreasoning, and dream for instance? And what a feast of clichés and hack phrases the story provided: "A radiant effulgence suffused his body", "before him yawned a vast cavern", "O-unless second" etc. Surely there's something wrong when the Soul does things like seeing about turning on the adrenalin?+++ "This Man and Machine Business" touched only the bare fringe of the subject but I am grateful to Mr. Rathbone for providing me with inspiration for at least two articles on the subject. I have many criticisms of his arguments but they could only be dealt with fully in another article. But I shall probably be too lazy to write it. Lazy ourselves, we sympathize. "Visit to a Factory in 1999" was not very inspired and if its whole point lay in the last few lines it was far too long. The writer seemed to have no imagination. Heaven knows, it would have been a pretty tame description of some of today's factories -- ask Smith -- he works, I believe, in the biggest workshop under a roof in England. Maybe the world. Here again was poor writing. "A billion lights flickered in the interstices.....and a billion eyes peered and unpeered." It may have meant something to the writer: the words are there but they convey little of his own feeling about the matter, if, indeed, he did have any. Smith hit the nail on the head in the first paragraph of his article. "Imagination is not done unless the author can transfer his thoughts into words in such a way that the words will re-create in the mind of the reader the thoughts that inspired them."+++ Pseudonyms are much too prevalent nowadays. Your contributors have names like Wells' characters. Why? I don't suppose they are afraid to use their own names? I must admit it is pleasing to criticize articles when one hasn't the faintest idea who has written them; but pseudonyms are over-done, I consider.+++6 For "Emopoinis". Compared with some other contributions it is excellently written, though not exceptionally witty. But there may be allusions in it that I have missed. I have only just realised that Auburn is Clark Ashton Smith's abode.+++I rather admire your searchlight on conscription and am amazed that you, arch Michelist-baiter, should dabble with things outside Fantasy. "On Conscription" is rather boisterous, (but it's a hectoring subject).+++ "Fantast's Folly" is really good. I liked Smith's quatrain on that exceedingly puzzling matter, your name. Good for Harry Turner for sitting on Cameron. Acherman I passed by with my brain in a whirl. It amazes me the way in which moderately good material is elaborately over-praised - cf. Aslan and the McIlwain fairy-story. (But I suppose it's no more amazing than the way in which I criticize your contributions individually, and yet lavish high praise on the magazine as a whole.) I take the greatest satisfaction in accepting Eric William's invitation to call him a Philistine -- he is mildly derogatory at the expense of sympathy orchestras! (But far more open-minded on the subject and appreciative of them than the average fantasy reader.)+++Thank you for cutting out all the piffings about fan activities and poetic humorous bits and pieces. And thank you doubly for providing a magazine that is a source of inspiration rather than something to slide away an odd moment.---H.K.Hanson 88 Graye Inn Road, V.C.B.

And, of course, Arthur C. Clarke, Z.G.D., M.D. (not Doctor of Medicine):

"I had intended to write to you before long commenting on "Fantast" and as I see Maurice is doing the same the chance of saving a stamp is too good to miss. Though I suppose it will use my stamps anyway....+++I passed a very interesting half hour reading your latest, which is every bit as good as the ones before. Starting at the front and working through the issue (I always like to be original) here's my rating. Cover - idea and execution poor, not so good as the last.+++The Introvert. Quite good, though the purple passages in it seemed rather overdone - more like a takeoff if you get me. It was quite gripping in the middle, and I enjoyed reading it.+++Man and Machine. Old ideas, one or two good bits but on the whole not too well written. Could have done it a lot better myself. But that, of course, applies to most things.+++Factory, 1999. Some comments. The ending was good, but the whole idea might have been much better worked out. The main objection I have is that the author showed no imagination in his description -- at the end of all these passages purporting to conjure up some titanic factory half a century hence all I had was the picture of some obscure corner of the local Ford factory. It was in fact absolutely commonplace and might apply to any reasonably large works. Which is very much of an anti-climax.+++Panopolis. I enjoyed Fantast's rather pathosous work, particularly the bit about the Brain. Very amusing. Conscription. Well! First of all, I don't like the writing, which is untidy and poor. Secondly, I object to this "divine right of the Anglo-Saxon Nations" which the whole thing exudes. Conscription is a sacrifice, is it? But a sacrifice by whom? Precisely that portion of the country which is in no way responsible for the present state of affairs. So much for democracy! Again, I do detest this Kiplingesque attitude of England, right or wrong. I'm not in the slightest bit interested in England except insofar as it supports the ideals which seem to me to be good. Which, to a large extent, it happens to do. Whether it will always do so is another matter. If it didn't I should fight it just as willingly - or unwillingly - as any other country. And above all, I hate the use of emotional labels, and anyone I find using the word "Fun" I shall tear into small pieces. Not being a "Medical Student", nor yet a weakling, my victim would not find that a particularly comfortable experience, since, like torso murderers new to the job, I should be sure to miss the joints.+++As England's foremost SF author once remarked to me (in the Royal Enclosure at the end of last season) "Kipling is a great crowder -- on his own dung-heap". Your quotation from "Hellas" was the best of all possible answers to his jingles.+++Smith's article was of course one of the best in the issue, though the sarcasm was a little heavy. But the subject needed it, and the quiet, devastating dignity of the last sentence was priceless.+++Brief delay here: Maurice has just turned me out and I have to continue typing upstairs. Never met such a dourhouse as Maurice; gets to bed at midnight or earlier every night. Reaction to Movee Terras -- we know!+++The letters were very interesting and your interjections as amusing as ever. Incidentally, who's the guy who objected to Ted reprinting bits of Eric Hopkin's personal letter? Eh? James a bushel, wherewith to hide our light?

I suppose in future when we write to you we must indicate the bits not to be published under any circumstances." /Some do!  
Arthur C. Clarke. 38 Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1.

Says Smith:

"In 'This Man and Machine Business' it seemed to me that too much time was spent in discussing the matter from the prosaic angle for a magazine devoted to fantasy. In addition the author, for all his good intentions, talked pure, undiluted twaddle. I am not, by the very nature of my trade, anti-machine age, but there is no doubt that the modern mass production factory has destroyed the interest of many formerly highly skilled jobs by reducing the need for skill and thought on the part of the workman down to the absolute minimum. I have not time to dissect the article thoroughly now, I would, if you like to go into the matter in more detail /No please/ but I will assure you that Mr. Rathbone's ideas are exactly opposite those of everyone I've ever talked with engaged in light engineering trades, (motor-car manufacture etc.) and opposite the ideas of the writers in the trade papers too. As for the future of the machine, see "The Robot Ultimate" for my own rather immature ideas on the subject.+++The Medical Student's article on conscription annoyed me more for its silly way of putting the argument than anything else. If, supposing I were to do any such silly thing, I were to argue for conscription, I think I could make a better case than a fatuous appeal to the outmoded sentiment of Kipling. The chief point would be that conscription is so much the more comfortable procedure than whole-hearted pacifism in the end, even if that end is war, that the normal person would choose the army as the lesser of two evils. It is useless pacifists saying that their policy of turning the other cheek is the easiest and surest way to happiness. A good many Austrians and Czechs are finding that they had better die before a flame-thrower than tried to live under their new masters. There can be no belittling the enormous waste and stupidity of warfare, but under present conditions the alternative is awful to contemplate for the average person. Anyway, his arguments were singularly ill-put." G.R. Smith

Murmurs Mack:

"I have neither the time, paper, nor patience to comment on the cowardly ANONYMOUS article. /Not even a "hey" mouse - see previous letter/ This article is typical of the distorted, spoiled view-point with which the majority of Britain's youth is afflicted; nationalism and stinking patriotism coupled with unreasoning dogmatism. It would seem that this "Medical Student" is only an N.S. by virtue of eublation of his aggressive and sadistic urges. Probably he finds an outlet for his leanings towards mass slaughter by butchering the cadavers in the dissecting room. Let him be - he is beyond mortal aid." D.McIlwain

Thrasars Williams: "My guess for that obvious pen-name (I can't spell pseudonym) Gerald K. Bluggins is Fantacynic, and as I think this last named is David McIlwain, then it looks as if you are pretty hard up for writers. /Our guess for that obvious pseudonym (we can spell it!) is Eric Guthbert Williams, and what are you going to do about it?+++Bubbles Burke: "Bluggin's identity is:

quite obvious to the dumbest - which means that I succeed right away who it was. The title, the writing, and the pseudonym... When I tackled the gent on Saturday he said "Last--I wanted to ask you what you thought of it first." ++Smith's letter is good but I was surprised about that crack at me - not so much by the crack as the fact that, sitting in the shade of a...you know...I was feeling at peace with the world, and unable to conjure up one of those annihilating shafts of rude wit that have made me so infamous in Kensington Street and that little hamlet called London. After thinking hard for some thirty seconds, I can think of nothing...I must just say that I hope his false teeth fall out when he's rolling the words round his mouth, and bite him in the knee. He would probably turn out to have a wooden leg, anyway ++Ithanyoon etc. You can call at 57 Belucclair any time, and my Zombie will show you a mouldering pile in the corner some two or three feet high, with pretty little rejection slips ranging from ASTOUNDING to TOMAN'S OWN and back again via the STRAND and PEG'S PAPER." Yaps Youd: "Composite Criticism is off, since apparently very few people both buy and read Astounding. Reviews of magazines telecomb. Will the Editor Mr. Chapman please consider passing on the Merry-Go-Round given to him six months ago, or shall we get our M.S. to practise butchery on him? That editor of what magazine is criticising stories without reading them? (No prizes for answer). Next issue will be a fortnight late, due to holidays. "Fandom Debunked" rejected a f t e r etcussiling. Those wanting copies of this pernicious pamphlet will write to me - but, I warn you, it's poison! Finally - "High Lights in Local Government" - 'Plese excuse Johnny going to the Clinic's he is sufering from chicken-porks'.

Stultitia in PARVO

Kate Komments from Skotland's King of Kreeps - James Rathbone, editor of "Macabre" to be - 1st week in August, we hear.

"I've told Osmond my idea of the cover, so I can't say other than I thought this cover is not so good as the last. Notice that: now floating about in the right-hand bottom corner? Strayed from Atlantis? Wonder how my name got there? Ask of the fairies in Fancyporn's garden? ++I'd an awful job trying to find the editorial that wasn't. Bravo, Mr. Youd, give it 'em straight! And what about making a forecast of coming issues a regular feature? Remember, picture the delight of the readers on finding I have another article being published! (Did I hear anything like a particular type of fruit from the editorial/sanctum?) Remember our dignity! "The Introvert". My impressions were rather mixed. I think good. But I don't like the ending. Indefinite. ++"Factory in 1998" was good descriptive work but perhaps a trifle over-descriptive. It should have been a bit shorter, I think. But then, I often think wrong. "Fanopolis" - "Fancynic" - here's my hand! It was good! Less better than that first bit. More! Let's all go oate. ++"On Con-cription". Hmm. Once upon a time there were Seven Dwarfs, and when they came home one evening they found a monster in their beds. So they sent a harmless idiot of their company up to get rid of it saying: "Go on, Dopey, we're right behind yer, ain't we boys?" Or am I wrong? D. R. Smith's article: I'm about to commit heresy. I didn't think much of it. My impression was that D.R.S. wrote that

(See Contents' Page)