

FUTURIAN WAR DIGEST

Incorporating

"PSEUDO-FUTURIAN" and "Science Fantasy Review's WAR DIGEST"

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"TALES OF WONDER" OUT SOON

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As this issue goes to press, we learn from Walter H. Gillings, its editor, that the thirteenth issue of "TALES OF WONDER"; though delayed; will be published in the near future. The miracle has again occurred and Britain still has a science-fiction magazine!

The issue will feature John Beyrons "Wanderers of Time"; C.A. Smiths "Dimension of Chance"; a new story, "The Power Supreme" by Geo.C. Wallis, and "The Book of Worlds" introducing Miles J. Breuer, M.D., besides a story by Coutts Brisbane, "The Law of the Universe" which had to be held over from the previous issue. There is a really good selection of "ideas" on the "Future of man" with the inevitable contribution by Reader Robb; though the other prize-winners are first-timers! The next subject in this series will be "The Conquest of Time".

This issue will see the inauguration of a "permanent" cover specially drawn by "Nick", in the centre of which the principal contents of each issue will be printed.

Further issues are still a possibility; beyond that nothing further can be said.

"Weird Shorts" now out ✓

Number 6 in Messrs Gerald Swan's series of "Yankee Shorts" entitled .. "Yankee Weird Shorts" was published recently. The same inferior format has been used but the tales are surprisingly good; and the booklet is worth the modest 3d. in these days. Main stories are; "Death of Julian Moreton" by W.D. Chakroft, "Spider Fire" by Kay Hammond; and "Fobidden Waters" by George Scott.

BAD NEWS ON THE BOOK FRONT

During the City of London's "Fire-blight" last month, British publishers suffered badly. About half of London's famous book publishers had their premises or warehouses destroyed, so that repercussions on the fantasy book field will no doubt be great. One estimate says that about 6,000,000 books totaling over a million pounds in value, went up in flames. The immediate result, as it hits us, is that apart from such stocks as remain in bookshops, perhaps the majority of fantasy books are now "out of print", and a good number will be absolutely unobtainable. When those worthy of it will be reprinted is very doubtful indeed under war conditions.

From Manchester too, comes bad news. There, we hear, the Atlas Publishing & Distributing Co. had its warehouse destroyed by fire; and we understand that this might mean a break in the issuance of the British Reprint Editions put out by this company.

Other Book News

Messrs Cape have just issued a new series of paper-backed books at 1/- each; and the first batch includes H.R. Wakefield's "A Ghostly Company" - the title is fully descriptive! A recent addition to "The Thinkers Library" is "The Twilight of the Gods" by Richard Garnett, price 1/3 - a selection of nine out of 28 short fantasy tales under this title.

B O O K R E V I E W b y B E R T L E W I S

I must crave the indulgence of my readers, for my absence from this page for so long; however I'll try to do better in future, so far as the Government will spare me.

For the Wells fan there is one book, of note, which comes under the heading of fantasy; and by this, I mean, that I can't possibly class it as science-fiction in the true sense. For the interested here it is: "All Aboard For Ararat" by H. G. Wells, (Secker and Warburg 3/6). He seems to use The Flood, as it were, as an archetype of world catastrophes, personally, I feel that, when Wells has to resort to "stealing" his plots from the Bible, he's getting a bit short of plots; however you are entitled to your opinion, so there you have it!

Those who know their Joseph Jorkens, will be delighted to hear that he is still spinning his skyscraper-tall yarns at the Billiards Club. Those who haven't, as yet, made his acquaintance, will be advised to get hold of his new collection of stories, called "Jorkens Has A Large Whisky" by Lord Dunsany (Putnam 8/6). It is difficult to explain the exact charm of this great story-teller. Hear him discourse, in his inimitable way, on Ghosts; Elephants who shoot their hunters; Respectable folk finding satyrs in their back gardens; Men visiting Mars; Lions fighting unicorns; in fact, on the whole, a most delectable collection.

For the fan who does not disdain the idea of a fantasy book being considered "juvenile" so long as it is fantasy, I can recommend "The House in the Mountains", by Averil Demuth (Hamish Hamilton 7/6). She gives us fantasy on a background of actuality in spells of the Sorceress and the Witch, and, has a magic all her own, in its telling.

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Another Suggestion - from Julian BRR

Now - how about a 'FANDOM GPO'? This renowned object is the product of much thought on my part, and seems to be quite practicable, as follows; Each fan sends his letters (to other fans or fan-mags) in one big envelope (each letter in its own small envelope) to Michael Rosenblum, and encloses 1d. for each letter. Mr. R, while publishing 'Fido' sends it out in a large envelope, enclosing, the letters received for him, to each fan. Thus, I am enclosing a letter to GA, Cosmos, Moonshine & Dawn Shadows. If the scheme was working, I should enclose 4d in stamps, & thus pay part of the postage. Other letters would be sent similarly and Michael would send them, after 14 days or a month, to the recipients. By including personal letters to fans in this scheme we could save both stamps & unnecessarily irregular sending and receiving of letters at the expense of a

week or two's delay in the 'post'. Important and urgent letters, would of course, be sent direct. What do you think of this?

Well, so far as British fans are concerned, I am perfectly agreeable. JMR

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P E R S O N A L C O L U M N

Firstly I must acknowledge receipt of communications from E.F. Russell, R.E. Orme, W.H. Gillings, M.K. Hanson, A.C. Clarke, & Miss A. Featherst to which no further reply will be made.

D. Doughty, 31 Bexwell Road, Downham Market, Norfolk, wants copies of Astounding, 34 to 37., good condition. Send list and prices.

Wanted - good condition, all issues Science Fantasy Review (War Digest 1-7), Postal Preview Nos 1, 17 onwards. Also issues of Astounding & Unknown. Send list first. D. Houston, 142 Ardington Road, Northampton.

S'all there is room for this month.

REPORT ON PROGRESS

Since the "SUGGESTION" published in last month's FIDO a volunteer for the organisation and running of such a "MSS circulation bureau" has come forward, and we are very pleased indeed to be able to say that Doug Webster is prepared to tackle the job. Naturally he will require the co-operation of us all in getting the scheme going and running it afterwards; especially from those industrious people who have manuscripts available, that they would be kind enough to loan to fandom at large. We hope that Doug will give details soon in his "The Gentlest Art".

A letter from E. F. Russell replies to the particular request re his ms. "Regarding Julian Parr's query, the story in question was turned down by Campbell on the ground that it "had a good idea but was too tough for our readers." But someone else may think otherwise. It's still in U.S.A and being submitted elsewhere . . . So the position is that I can hardly do anything for Mr. Parr until such time as the yarn is turned down by everybody and comes back.

The yarn has little to recommend it, except that it suggests there may be reasons for certain types of lunacy, reasons from which science shies like a frightened horse. . . However if the MSS eventually should squirm with a slimy slurp through my letter box, I'll send it along and let the boys maul it."

Received Recently

Instead of just listing and reviewing amateur magazines received, we think it would be preferable to mention the high spots of the month as they strike us. Of this month's bag, the finest item is the Dec. issue of ALCHEMIST (Lew Martin 1258 Race St., Denver, Colorado) with 44 octavo pages well-mimboed, and really fine illustrations by Hunt, Bok and Knight. The mag is featuring long and well thought out articles on worthwhile topics, & this issue offers "Dead End" by R.W.Lowndes, discusses the reaction of fans to the escapist element in modern fantasy.

Australia is brightening up! During the month we have received usual FUTURIAN OBSERVER, number 6 of ULTRA (E.F.Russell - not our ERR -) and the first issue of Russell's emergency bulletin HERMES; the second issue of AUSTRALIA-FANTASY (Warwick Hockley 183 Domain Rd., S.Yarra, SE1 Melbourne) and the first issue of the same gentleman's MELBOURNE BULLETIN. General verdict on these publications is that Austra-fandom has not yet reached the maturity of both the British & US fan worlds so that their publications are not so well produced, nor their matter so good but the enthusiasm is present all right. Good luck to them!

Other magazines received include PLUTO; FANFARE; SUNSPOTS; IFA REVIEW FANTASY NEWS; and SARDONYX - an FAPA publication from Louis Russell Chauvenet, unique for being entirely hand-written

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A D L E N D A to "Fantasy On The Cheap", published last month.

Bernard Newman - "The Cavalry Goes Through" (Cherry Tree Books)
How the last war might have gone, with lessons in tactics for this one
S. Fowler Wright - "The Secret of the Screen" (Cherry Tree Books)
- with a little sf. but chiefly a thriller.

Also recommended though not science fiction
"The Genius of Louis Pasteur", by Piers Compton (Bay Tree Books)

R. Lane.

EDITORIAL January 26th; at this almost last moment, Edward Rennison has sent in three sides for his sheet COSMOS, thus giving me an extra side to fill. You therefore, have him to thank for the eleventh hour inclusion of some of the departments I have already apologized for omitting; and in particular for this editorial of a sort. The only thing I can say about FIDO's litter this month is "Whoopee!", and I suspect you will be thinking the same. What with all these sheets plus a couple of suggested schemes we are becoming more like a club than a mere magazine; which is grand. Of course we want more subscribers too, though the circulation has been coming along fairly nicely, so if you have a pal who ought to be getting FIDO .. tell him so! Two new sheets are on the point of breaking off (pardon the billiards metaphor, it just came) namely Doughty's "TIN-TACKS"; and an art effort from Harry Turner

J. M. Rosenblum

BOOKLIST

Additions to February 1941

500	Air Bandits	David Lindsay
501	Which Hath Been	Mrs Jack McLaren
502	The Murder Germ	Captain A. O. Pollard
503	Gullivers Travels	Swift
504	The Imitation Man	John Hargrave
505	The Missing Moneylender	W. S. Sykes
506	Saurus	Eden Phillpotts
507	Draught of Eternity	H. M. Egbert
508	The Television Girl	G. de S. Wentworth-James
509	The Green Ray	William Le Queux
510	The Recipe for Rubber	R. Stock
511	A Woman - Or What	Mrs Norman Lee
512	Dr. Nik Nikola's Experiment	Guy Boothby
513	Twilight of the Gods	Richard Garnett
514	The Cavalry Goes Through	Bernard Newman

FILM CHATTER

A fantasy film has been careering round the country and if you have missed it so far, watch out for it at your local cinema. Entitled "Earthbound", 'Renny' comments as follows; Warner Baxter's soul (?) remained on earth after he died & he had to tell people who his murderer was. Not so good a story & how a man who walks through walls doors etc. as a natural occurrence can sit down perfectly at ease on a form or chair is beyond me.

Have you noticed that all adverts for the film "The Invisible Man Returns" show a fully clothed man-'being invisible' whereas, of course, to be invisible the hero had to be entirely nude.

Introducing
John Edward Rennison No 5

About 6ft tall, wears glasses, high forehead, brown (medium coloured) hair, sarcastic, argumentative, somewhat cynical, good sense of humour. Born 20th September 1924. Read s.f. for many years, entered fan field in 1940, now editing our companion magazine COSMOS. Hobbies; keen on cycling and swimming, sf reading, likes pictures & variety etc. Ambitions; to wander aimlessly about the world, and to be in the first spaceship to leave the Earth.

Edited by J. Edward Rennison at 82 Ramsgrave Drive, Blackburn, Lancs. and still duplicated and distributed by J. Michael Rosenblum.

EDITORIAL :

Much to my astonishment I find that GOSMOS is able to continue and I hope prosper. Many thanks are due to all fans who have taken the time and trouble to write to me and it was indeed with great pleasure that I received so much correspondence. This issue is, I believe, a great improvement on the 1st and if progress continues I ought to be able to produce a really decent sheet, (no cracks). All fans who like visiting the local cinema ought to see " Edison, The Man". The story is extremely good and there is some superb acting by Spencer Tracy. The final speech is one that appeals to the nations to work together (what a hope). A letter received recently from Donald Doughty tells me that so far he has only received two letters for the sheet that he intends to produce on ASTOUNDING. Rally round brothers and help him as you have helped me. I gather that my argument was not approved by many and in this issue Douglas Webster starts a new one of his own... tear it to pieces and all the other letters as well and let's start something really hot. 'S all for this month, All the Best, "Renny".

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 A short story by an unknown contributor. AN ALIEN VISITOR. Do YOU know who ?
Holmes, - he knows.

It was a thing of beauty that came to be fed from the remains of my morning's repast. For a time the bird eat of the small morsels that I had to offer and then came and perched on my shoulder. It was more than an ordinary bird, it was bold and it carried an air of indescribable, but nevertheless, wonderful co-ordination of intelligent functions. Everything was at peace; but after a while alien thoughts commenced to register their presence on my mind and I saw other-world scenes and bizarre and fantastic occurrences and life in other forms than that of human shape appeared before me, as in a sequence of pictures. Then thoughts of supernatural nature portrayed themselves... of a mighty Science and a glorious Peace and endlessly new scenes were conceived and created. As I stood in a daze after the portrayal of such wonder the bird flew away towards the rising Sun and no more did I see it. Those pictures however still haunt my mind and someday I believe that I shall see the worlds in their natural state and not by telephapy. That is my answer to the question of why fans read stf. I thang yew.

FOR SALE at the above address :- SCOOPS. 1,3,84. 6d. each. Amazing Stories Oct. 1935. 8d. Weird Story Mag. Aug. 1940. 6d. Marvel Tales. Dec. 1939 9d. All the above POST FREE.

LETTERS.

From Dave McIlwain. "GG" is now u der way, but if you wish to suscribe, don't send more than 3 months' subs., as there is the possibility of my performing a quick change into uniform in the near future! (Hard lines Dave. Wo'll miss "GG")
 Quoth Ronald Lane: "I won't remark on your first issue, (I don't blame you for being polite) not that it's so bad, (not that it's so good), but after all, it's only an introduction. You've chosen a good subject for an argument (at least someone likes it). I've read a few issues prior to 1931 but they weren't very good ones. Some in 1933 were very good. Campbell wrote in AMAZING a good deal then, but later AMAZING DEGENERATED (sorry) in every way save the Discussions until Z-D. took it over (can this be a person that actually liked/likes Z-D's. AMAZING?). I've read very few T.W.S or WONDER prior to 1936 so I won't comment on them, save that they have always leaned towards sheer adventure. ASTOUNDING has maintained a consistently good standard since it began, with plenty of..... really superb stories 'The Mightiest Machine', 'Skylark of Valoron' and the rest of E.E. Smith's and Campbell's stories, some classic shorts and novels, but I think

that there has been a little variety in the last two years. F.F. NOVELS & MYSTERIES UNKNOWN and perhaps those 3 issues of FANTASY, which was far better than T.O.W. has improved the quality of sf. and fantasy judging from the few issues I've read. To think some of the finest sf. is being reprinted now and one cannot obtain it. One squirms mentally, does not one? Anyhow I think the present standard is higher than in any other year, even the much praised 1932."

Short but Sweet..from Ron Holmes. "Well, Brother, you've launched COSMOS (the title has been used before y'know) (up to now I haven't had chance to forget it) and I see a rosy future for it. (Thanks pal.) First of all, who's been able to get their hands upon mags. for the last year except a chosen few of us ?? I'm afraid the last point of discussion will be limited, however, if you want my opinion 'S.F. has gone to the Dogs."

From Norfolk.. Donald Doughty. "On reading your self-explanatory notes (at least someone read them at any rate) I immediately thought, 'them's just my sentiments too - thinking of the days when I'd never seen a fan mag., and thought that fan must be a Stf. way of saying 'twerp' (maybe it is for a' that). Now referring back to your remarks about the depreciation of Stf. I presume that you are talking about the kind of stuff that AMAZING, FANTASTIC ADVENTURES, MARVEL etc. turn out under the guise of Stf. as we seem to agree that ASF is hitting the high spots at present, and I also think that the 10¢ mag. ASTONISHING presents much better and more scientific material than any 15¢ mag.. Now if you have ever read any of the Clayton ASTOUNDINGS you will find plenty of action in these stories, whilst the present ASF presents a nicely balanced story - with enough science; AMAZING however has gone the other way, from the highly scientific to the highly active story. WONDER I cannot say much about as I have only read about the last 3 year's issues, but they seem to get a great many authors of the type that I object to in their pages Kummer, Kuttner (did you see that muck he turned out for MARVEL?), F.B.Long, Burks and several others."

From the MOONSHINE(r)..J.F. Burke. "So you want controversial letters as well? This business of stoking up the old brain (a fan with a brain, never) and producing arguments to stimulate the Great British Public to some form of activity is becoming somewhat enervating. I don't really see anything to argue about that would suit you; (that sounds a bit like sarcasm to me, however.....) I'm not prepared to go into that rather old question of modern stf. as opposed to the older brand, but if anyone does happen to write a letter to you in which I can pick holes I'll do so at once. My own preference is for the older stuff; I've dropped off modern fantasy, though various kind gentlemen in America send me stuff every now and then and Doug. lends me mags.. Most of them are unspeakably silly and written in the most deplorable style, and even though most of the earlier efforts could not be called literature, they were at least more competently written than ASTOUNDING's gangster-style stories, (make a note of that Donald) and the modern WEIRD TALES junk. Incidentally, I don't see the relevance of your revelation re the camp at Whalley. What does it matter to us whether there's a secret entrance or not? It does offer possibilities for a weird tale or a story of the 4th Dimension, or sump'n - just pressing the 5th spike on the 3rd strand of barbed wire, between posts 14 & 15 reading from the sentry-box, and warping yourself into another dimension. Not that most of the Army needs warping. Well, I've said little enough, but if I think of any ideas for COSMOS OUTS I'll send them along."

From Dougie, I correct myself with apologies, Douglas Webster. "Having glanced at the signature somewhere at the end of this letter, you know who I am, and I can only add that (a) the Introduction in this (he means last) month's FIDO is about 50% inaccurate, inadequate and/or out of date; (b) my name is NOE Dougie; my name makes me bitter - from Michael, whom I thought to be my friend. Your first COSMOS was terrific, superlative, breath-taking. (Oh, Doug, you make me blush...Goracha) At least it was better than the G.A., although that doesn't mean much (on year). Still, we seem to be getting together quite a collection of talents, (am I included?) and let me advise you to watch Johnny Burke closely; if I know him, MOONSHINE will go places in a neat little literary way. (Thanks for the advice and you bet I'll

Being some fragments from the letters on controversial subjects received from YOU (I hope) by Douglas Webster, "Idlewild", Fountainhall Road, Aberdeen; per the courtesy of JMR.

* * * * *

I had thought of saying some nicely chosen words here, about the snow and fan life in general, and the letters which have been arriving from the UK, and the letters and magazines which have not been arriving from the USA, and that useful game, rugby, which has allowed me to stay at home for three weeks on end, and so on; but it would all take up too much space, and one much better qualified to hold your attention is---

MAURICE K. HANSON, who says: "I can't say that I sympathise with Johnny B's denunciation of the British people. I was once as indignant as he that the common herd should be interested in beer & football to the exclusion of most other things. No doubt it would be better if they paid more attention to sociology & culture but after eighteen months of knocking about in a fantastic variety of situations with the British male I can't seriously grumble about him as a person. A few of my associates I positively detest, the majority find tolerable in reasonable doses, & a few I like a lot. From what I see of him on the screen & in the fan-mags I've no reason to believe I should appreciate the American bunch any more, nor from personal experience do I think appreciably higher of the French variety. Beyond that I have no personal experience & can make no practical comments - but does Johnny think that French, German, American or Japanese politicians are any more sincere & reputable than our own /He does not! Here I definitely side with him against DRS - we hold that politicians as a whole do not work for peace, security and friendship, & I think that though they are doubtless only human, they might do a much better job than they always have done, by showing some desire for co-operation., does he think that America is any more broad-minded than this country when it passes the Eighteenth Amendment, turns up its nose at Bertrand Russell & shudders at the sound of the word "Radical", & does he know that if the Germans have produced Goethe, Nietzsche, Beethoven etc. we have produced Elgar, Purcell, Locke, Hume, Shakespeare, Stuart Mills, Newton, Turner, Keats, Swift... (and Stapledon!)"

. . . Which is most reasonable & most reasonably stated. However, I think that (as is inevitable when I quote only parts of letters), you have misunderstood one or two of JFB's points - Smith managed to misunderstand most of them, so I've chosen to miss out his remarks. I wrote Johnny along these lines: result---

JFBurke: "Agree completely with your views on British people. They are not rogues; I sometimes wonder if I don't prefer rogues to fools - at least the rogues know what they're doing, and most of them are working in accordance with an obscure but sincere moral code of their own. It is the tendency to "go with the crowd" that has produced the type of unconstructive, lazy mind that is now associated with the British. We have had great men, and there is no reason why we shouldn't have more, but so long as the people are so apathetic and so antagonistic to anything that may shake them out of their apathy (and even in fighting a war, however strenuously, they seem apathetic) we aren't likely to see very much of value coming out of these islands. It isn't really antagonism, since antagonism is a positive feeling, and people who are only half-awake can't be positive about anything except that they don't feel like getting up." . . . Another point which was perhaps not made clear is that the Burke does not belittle English men of science & the arts as compared with the German samples, but considers the Germans, having produced the latter, are not simply a race of barbarians. Which they aren't.

J. MICHAEL ROSENBLUM (subtitled, British fans look the other way - this is for American eyes): "How about you slipping a couple of lines in the next G.A. asking American fan editors if they would be so good as to send you a copy of their mag - either direct to you or with mine (& I'll send it on). At a guess, Bob Tucker, F.J. Ackerman & M. Manning will be most likely to oblige." Well, US editors, what about it? You receive The G.A., & if you slipped another copy of your magazine into JMR's envelope it wouldn't cost you extra postage; if also you included a short note sometime, I'd be glad to do you any favour I can. I remember writing a number of you last year, asking for terms, & the reason I haven't heard from you may be the same as the reason no promags have been arriving for the

last couple of months. In which case I can but weep...and hope.

And now comes the conclusion of ANTON RAJATZY's problem in the first issue. Turn back to the Dec. G.A. - if you still have it around - and see how well the Theory fits the facts. Thereafter - why not try disproving it?

"First step: Arms & legs are quite normal, and are correctly supplied with veins equipped with valves suitable for their upright position. Therefore---Arms & legs must be vertical. Second step: Head, neck & shoulders are also suited to vertical position, as, although the veins contain no valves, the blood flows downwards. Third step: The portal system, the spinal cord & other internal veins are not supplied with valves, & are not suitable (to the best advantage) for the vertical position. Therefore---These veins must be placed either in an upside down position (which is obviously impractical), or horizontal. The horizontal position would solve the problem of the lower trunk, while not out of order with the absence of valves in the veins of the head, neck & shoulders, as the blood within them can just as well flow horizontally as downwards. The limbs will still be vertical, & the human figure would be in a crouching position, on all fours. This is the only conclusion that can be drawn from the facts presented.* * * At first, one will take this statement just as a matter of fact, but wait -- here we have a machine, or an instrument, equipped for a natural position of crouching, with no provisions for a vertical, upright position. If I came across an instrument, say a microscope, which worked best in one certain position and, in all other positions it may be placed in, although it still performed its duties, it suffered from various complaints, & it had no provisions for the alleviation of the complaints (although such provisions would not interfere with its intended position, & would be quite simple to install), I should come to the conclusion that the maker of the instrument, whoever he was, had intended it for use in the first position -- wouldn't you? * * * One or two more conclusions which may be drawn from the above, with regard to complaints of the veins, namely Piles, Varicose veins, & others. All these are produced by distention of the veins, produced by the weight of the column of blood in the body! Also: "...if a man stands quite still the blood tends to accumulate in the veins of the legs & he is liable to faint from failure of the supply to his brain..." (Animal Biology, Haldane & Huxley, p. 100)* * * You want further proof? All right then, listen to this:- The position of the ribs in a man standing upright is horizontal. The veins between the ribs (intercostal veins) are not rising, against gravity, when they travel from breast bone to spinal vertebrae. If you take my advice, & place the man on all fours, his ribs will be vertical, the blood will flow up the veins between the ribs, & the veins will need valves. Extract from Dent's Medical Dictionary, p.590:- "...and the intercostal veins of man, as in animals, are well equipped with valves..." "

In the midst of a postcard which contains, besides date & two addresses (his & mine), no less than 152 words, quoth GEORGE MEDHORST: "Thanks immensely for your huge letter, which must have left you pretty thoroughly exhausted. Wild disagreement on numerous points, but that must be for the future. Hurrah! It's coming, gentlemen, it's coming -- wait for it! / ...my first & last fan-mag, a gentle little sheet called 'The Snag', whose production is dependent on two circumstances: (a) whether Michael will duplicate it, (b) whether Michael can duplicate it. If it does appear, that Youd will probably target. Other people infuriated and/or mortally wounded should include Johnny, Michael, yourself & The Smith. Quite a good bag, what? . . . London's a filthy mess. View from our window alone is heart-breaking." Boycott the Snag - an awful rag! (JFB collapses, foaming at the mouth.)

And why! here he is again - THE BURKE produces out of his hat one of these analyses I like to see, comparing two of the arts. It wasn't meant for the G.A. at all, but who cares? -- "It occurs to me that Dave's pal Sibelius could take some lessons from TSEliot. What I mean is that he should appreciate the value of tradition, and realise that progress can only be made with the backing of a good knowledge of what has gone before. Eliot, as a poet, has made startling experiments, but never loses h's dignity; most of his imitators produce nothing but unmusical nonsense, being unable to appreciate that mere newness is not worth achieving on its own. Sibelius as a musician is in the same position - he is trying so hard to be "different" that he is illogical and rather vulgar. I hope that future generations will be able to appreciate

his flashiness (for that's all it is) at its true worth. You can't drag the material for experiment out of thin air and hope to construct something solid and reasonable. Modern poetry is stabilising because the younger poets are realising that they must understand their place in a progressive scheme, but there are still many modern musicians who think that mere production of unusual noises is justifiable for the sake of novelty. . . . Perhaps any Sibelius-addict, named or unnamed, would care to contest this. Of course, whether or not it is true in the case of Sibelius is of little consequence - it's when you consider the wider significance that you see its truth.

And now the British arch-enemy, D.R. SMITH (but you should have seen the things he says about JFB & intellectuals! Very hot. I suppress 'em.): "I used to have a feeling that there might be something in the spiritualist movement until I read "The Road to Endor", which was very destructive to my credibility on the subject. Heck! I can't resist pointing out, Smith, that whether credulous or incredulous, you are quite incredible. In case you have not read it, the theme is the efforts of two British officers to escape from a Turkish prison camp during the last war, their plot depending on convincing the camp commandant that one of them was a medium guided by a spirit to knowledge of some treasure buried in the vicinity. They had all sorts of soances with ouija boards & with trances, convincing everyone in the camp that they were the genuine article by supplying fellow-officers with communications from the dear departed & with telepathic messages from persons far away; and for a side-line did a "mind-reading" act for a concert - "What is this that I have in my hand, come tell me quickly if you please?" as Arthur Askey and his friend parodied it. When they started they were absolute novices, but they did remarkably well at it, & now I doubt gravely most of the more obvious "spirit messages". Pic, sir - one thing you forget, that you are dealing with mathematics-student RGHedhurst & not a Turkish army officer. I hope I'm not doing an injustice to "The R. to E." (which I haven't read); but after all, RGH was just giving us the facts of an investigation he was conducting, as scientifically as is possible for an amateur, & his conclusions were frank & honest enough.

C.S. YOUNG: ". . . one excellent piece of advice:- never take DRSmith seriously. I am speechless with admiration at the tactics he has adopted against the pacifist element. Never will I call myself subtle again!"

The Sage of Huncaton

The Thyme of Warwickshire all chorus:

The Midland Herb

"Corporal Christopher Samuel Youd

May well - and does - feel proud.

A pacifist he? Ah no,

Mens sana in corpore sano.

Now work out whether that's a crack at Youd's militarism or your pacifism!" Ummm! What say, Sam, we'll get together & say something really nasty about DRSmith?
Protesting unhappily that "I see you are trying to drag me into some sort of low argument on swing. I refuse to participate - all my days of controversy are past", DAVE MOLLWAIN enters the arena. I can hardly do him justice in such a small space, but extracts follow: "The most painful error your S-A-of-D-T is the statement 'Least of all does jazz have technical brilliance'. He She, of course, is talking of jazz, & I of swing, and I say without hesitation that the technical standard of swing musicians is without a doubt higher, on the average, than that of symf. musicians. One has only to listen to a Basie or a Goodman recording to realise this. Symphony trumpet playing is on the whole rather poor, & does not even equal the lowly standard of the dance-band exponents. But the swing musicians are masters of their own respective instruments, & can usually improvise or extemporise in a manner that leaves the symf. men standing. After all, any fairly competent musician can play a piece of Bach or Beethoven on his instrument if he practises enough, but not everyone can improvise a satisfactory chorus of the "Pagan Love Song" at 60 bars a minute and keep in tempo & key. That's nothing - anyone can kick a man when he's down, but not everyone can forgive an injury. No, Mr S-A-of-D-T is wrong. Miss, I tell you, not Mr. But say, I must tell you about her someday, but not out here in the open. Most marvelous wench - her hair changes colour! Swing musicians are maestros. But I speak not for the jazz pluggers - they're not worth defending, if they're defensible at all. . . . The effects of the ragtime bands of twenty years back

are already buried & mouldering, but Sibelius uses exactly the same musical palette as Beethoven, & produces something entirely fresh & exciting, because he succeeds in using his music as a means to an end - self expression, instead of allowing himself to be sidetracked into the mere search for novelty and the unusual. /But JFB says...ah, well.../

Anxious friends may have noticed lately that the Hermit of the North has not all his frivolity of old - deposed, poor fellow, as the northern outpost of civilisation by EDWIN MACDONALD: of the I.R.A. ("Oh no!. Don't misunderstand me - the Inverness Royal Academy"), who says, on being advised to stack his stf. magazines in piles--- "Where do you think I should stifle them in packs anyway? In whatever room is left under the bed? or in the bed with me? or perhaps I could put them in the fireplace behind a firescreen and pile them up the chimney? - plenty room then. ...Another idea, tho' perhaps not so good, has just struck me! - There is the possibility of ripping open an end of one's mattress, & shoving one's s-f in there, taking out the original stuffing as one puts in more mags. ...Fans who read Paul Freehafer's account of his 'overflowing' in a copy of VOM last year will note that while Paularis excels in getting out of hand, he cannot hold a candle to the Hermit of the Highlands when it comes to ingenuity. Vive l'Ecosse!

D. WEBSTER: "I think only two people - Hanson & Smith - gave me a reply this month to the "God Save The King" question. Please co-operate, gentlemen, for I am interested, & the statistics may be not without value to the simple-minded like myself."

D. R. SMITH: "Passing on to Burke again, & you too if you agree with him, the ignorant me proposes to abuse the intelligent you....I agree that politics are artificial & not inherent in man, but they are necessary for the cooperation of men in groups /I restrain myself manfully from saying something very sarcastic...nay, cynical/, and that is the only reason why Burke is not picking fleas off himself in a tree & jabbering to the rest of the intellectual Banderlog." . . . Ah, sweet slash! Who said English fandom was dead?

J. F. BURKE: "Smith is interesting, and puts forward a theory that should make Wollheim and Co. start to froth. I hope copies of the G.A. reach USA, as I should be very interested to see what Lowndes can make of this. Medhurst speaks truth. (In his brief interview, that is)." . . . Comments:- I, too, hope the Futurist gang have noted Smith's satire, & I'd like to have Doc's reactions if he's still at liberty. In fact, it seems to me it's about time the Americans were breaking into G.A., & RWL & others will be most welcome Re RGM. This was the matter of fans arguing about books. Well, of the fans who have written me so far this month (1st. half of Jan.), Turner, Rosenblum, Burke (ha!), Hanson, I think Macdonald & Smith, Ragatzy, & perhaps others have discussed books; Clarke, Doughty, Youd, Rennison &c. have not (short letters, anyway). So--- . Of course, quarrelling is another matter...but not so far removed.

ANTON RAGATZY: "An extract from a book on psychology - which might interest you with regard to Smith's monologue on pacifism /1st. G.A., not 2nd./- '...this goal, in every human individual, is one of superiority...to assert our individuality, to tower above others...thus arise jealousy, envy, avarice, intolerance, dogmatism, brutality, patronage, and all the poms and struttings of one half of the world, and the complacent saintliness, admiring self-pity, arrogant humility, boastful suffering of the other half...' (Troubled Mind by Roberts)" . . . M'yess... A neat sketch; but while agreeing that the human tendency is towards superiority, I've always thought (perhaps because I've wanted to think it) that it is a superiority over all that has gone before, a superiority over environment and the forces and mysteries of the universe. Anyone agree?

JULIAN F. PARR: "I'd love to see something like Smith's 'In Defense of Tea-Cup Reading' in GA -- just the thing!" This is my sentiment as well - please note, Messrs. Smith, Clarke, Williams & anyone-else-who-can-do-that-sort-of-thing. Please -- note.

YE EDITOR: "An important matter this time. Despite the solemn warning of the Bard, Webster feels that The G.A. will have to develop a nickname. It may not trouble you people, but I just can't go on, every time I write anyone, repeating - Capital-T-small-h-e-space-capital-G-thump-A-thump. Julian Parr suggests GA(S); a debility of the faculties overcomes me, & I groan. RGM's 'Gert' is fiendishly logical, but reminds me hideously of two 'comedienne' sisters. Ugh! Suggestions considered, but no rejection-slips issued." PS. Late news - very welcome 4-pager from Dorset, ending: "Remember me to all the boys as you write them, please. Cordially, Ted." Welcome home, old man!--full-fledged Gunner!

THE FLY IN THE OINTMENT

or

The Snag in Michael's Mailing

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Comprising Vol.1 No.1, with all the other numbers thrown in free of charge

Comrade fans: "The Snag" hereby claims the proud distinction of being the only fan-mag on record that starts out grimly determined never to sink to the issue of a Vol.1, No.2. If Michael will kindly duplicate No.1 he will have a consolation nobody else's sheet can offer: that he will see no Snag ever more again. The Snag, in fact, sprang into being as a medium for one R.C. Medhurst to say a particular say. Not that he dreams of an unnumbered multitude hanging on his words, but because he has a constitutional weakness: to wit, a dislike of people Getting Away With Things.

& & & & &

Let us now give thought to one

Christopher Samuel Voud, fan, philosopher, and devotee of the Higher Logic. In the past, his well-aimed fanta-cynicisms have given considerable upset to a number of sensitive souls: but that is very likely why sensitive souls were placed in this world. Just recently, in War Bull, he has turned some part of his energies towards clearing up those vexing questions of Pacificism and the Future of Mankind. Those few who had the temerity to dispute his findings are annihilated by some cold clicks of the logician's typewriter: not, however, without some withering sarcasms on Ivory Towers and nomenclature. With much trepidation we determined to test the quality of this logic. Trembling, we ventured to indicate to our friend some of his pronouncements that seemed to us, in our muddled-headed way, contradictory. We even went to the length of nibbling tentatively at what we thought was the infirm foundation of his method of reasoning.

And with what result, comrade fans? No, you've all guessed wrong. Our Samuel didn't withdraw War Bull with much clamour about the feeble-mindedness of fans, as you thought last month. That appears to be mere camouflage, because another issue should appear in this mailing - with controversial matter eliminated!

That isn't quite all. It has been conveyed to us, somewhat indirectly, that our friend "didn't seem to like" our remarks.

Now, we are sorry, brother Samuel, that you don't feel it expedient to match your logic against ours. Or perhaps we are being egotistical. Possibly our strivings seem beneath the notice of a contributor to Lilliput, and one who has drunk at first hand of the wisdom of the intellectuals of the B.B.C. If that is so, we are even sorrier...for you. But we do not apologise for offending you, remembering how, in the past, you have always held the triumph of your logic as of far higher importance than any personal offence you may give.

What we regret above all is that you appear to feel under no obligation to give a hearing in your newsheet to any opposition your propaganda invokes. That attitude certainly isn't contrary to the rules of logic. What it does violate is intellectual decency.

Fido's Editor describes Samuel, in Fido No.3, as "searching frantically for an adequate philosophy of life, which he hasn't found yet". The way to trap that rare game is, not to formulate a theory and reject or ignore whatever fails to fit into it, but to attack any new idea or scrap of evidence with everything you've got,

and, if there's still anything left when you've finished then you have something to add onto the credit side of your "philosophy".

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The Snag had planned to snarl his snarl on one of the others of Fido's pups, "The Gentlest Art". His liver was stirred to wrath and his rabies roused by the unethical procedure by which The Smith is encouraged to extend and develop his Thoughts on War ("machine-superstition seasoned with arachair moralising on man's capacity for 'dumb endurance of agony'", sneers the Snag), sawhile opposition to his first effusion is "crowded out". "Sure you can sit on opposition: there's not a mug of 'ea 'd beef about that", clamours the Snag (it was our opposition, confound the disagreeable animal!), "but if you crowd that out you ought to darn well crowd out that Smith as well". He was heard to mutter something about "it ought to take two to make a row", which doesn't seem to make sense to us because The Smith can make a helluva row, all on his own. But, anyway, reflecting on such tried maxims as Honour Among Thieves we have come to the conclusion that we must suppress this particular Snarl of the Snag.

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Don't get the Snag wrong, comrades. He's a contankerous animal, sure enough, but you can tickle his funny-bone if you snear him with a piece of meat and really mean reasoning. His yellow fangs dripped widely in the snarl of mirth that Ronnie Holmes drew from him with this pretty proposition (spelling guaranteed authentic and highly original):

'Reminds me of an argument I had with a proprietress of a Cafe the other day. My crowning argument went like this. I pointed vaguely in the direction of our building and said, "If I went arround borrowing money from the fellow over there, I would be called a Scrounzer, a Sponger, someone who could not keep himself and had to rely on others. I would be branded as the lowest of the low, I would not be able to hold up my head with the lowest of them. That is the price of being a parasite. Now, to go to church and trust in a God, to do nothing but plead to be forgiven, to hope to eventually reach heaven thro' the good graces of a loving and providing God. That God becomes someone who you are scrounging from. You become reliant on someone else, and become low in the same sence ----- so, to be an average Christian is to be a "Bun". It won it's point and I went away leaving her dumfounded. I went outside and laughed until I ached, truly this is a verry funny world.

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Our Christopher Samuel gives as his reason for shutting down War Bull an alleged outcry from fans who have "found political and ethical discussion boring...when the greatest war is so palpably present". The Snag finds it just a little difficult to credit this. He tells us that, while his opinion of fans has been pretty low for the last fourteen years, he finds it hard to believe that they can still bury their heads in the sand while the Civilised World, not to mention H.E. and incendiaries, is tumbling about their backs. He says, in his crude way, that he'll need plenty of convincing if we want to have him think that even fantasy fans can be such abject fools. Maybe some of you fellows will help to convince him?

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To the rest of you, who still have some interest in life outside of rayguns and time-machines, we would heartily recommend

Herbert Best's outstanding novel, "The Twenty-fifth Hour". The Snag harbours a grudge against it because it was a Time's Literary Supplement choice as book-of-the-week, but despite this its a fine and topical account of the collapse of Americo-European civilisation at the end of this war. We know its been done, or attempted before, fans, but don't let that put you off. This is the real thing. Available at most libraries: and its even possible to buy the thing...

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We should explain that any tremulousness of our typewriter is not evidence of senility, but a result of the blitz that, on a bright moonlit night, is banging around us. We type furiously, while all but we have fled into the wee brick shelter, urged on by a Snag fairly bounding with heroism. Incidentally, being a thing of the spirit, bombs can't touch that exasperating beast. Anyhow, if the worst transpires, let us formally place on record that we Died for Pandom. And if you could see the view of London from our window you'd admit that the contingency isn't so remote.

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We do our best to restrain that animal, but the Snag, having burst through our guard, insists on telling Fido's shocked subscribers that Johnny Burke's remarks on Magic v. Science are a "pack of nonsense". He wishes to inform Johnny that he may know his magic, but he certainly doesn't realise what science (do you mean "mathematical physics", Johnny?) is driving at. How the blazes, he howls, can you compare, say, Dirac's latest electron theory, with its entire abandonment of the idea of the model, with the 4 element theory of the occultists?

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Query: would our Samuel, applying his Gargoylish technique for reading the fortune of innags from their pet-names, deduce that the "Snag" is a pleasant, chatty little paper that ought to have had a long life? (No prizes offered for best solution.)

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It took Thorne Smith to really put indecency on the fantasy map. And when he'd done it, it turned out to be one of the funniest things on record. The things that man couldn't do with a body - or two - and a little magic to display it properly are scarcely worth doing! Now, in the magazine fantasy world we've had sadistic indecency (see "Marvel Tales" and the old "Mystery-Adventure Mag.") and just plain indecency (see quite a few issues of "Weird Tales"). What we and the Snag want to know is, why we can't have a mag. of Funny Indecent Fantasy. There's a title, even, all ready for someone. Judging from Thorne Smith's sales, it ought to be a shocking success.

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Since it seems the fashion to boost one's pet political paper, we might mention that if you read "The Socialist Standard" (from The Socialist Party of Great Britain, 42, Great Dover Street, London, S.E.1. - 3d. post free - 1/6 for six months) you'll find very few catch-phrases, and not a lot of emotional appeal, but what you will find is an intellectually honest attempt to work out world problems on socialistic lines; and therein you may find some element of newness... Recommended to Communist comrades - "The People's Convention", in the December issue.

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Would you believe it! this shocking Snag had actually got it into his fearsome head that he was going to snarl on, of all people,

the G.O.M. of Fido! On the most elementary principles of tact, we have suppressed (see the trail scene in Alice) our Snag, and we will ourselves deal with the individual whom we hope to persuade to duplicate this. The passage that created the Snag ran thus:

"Why should I be shocked at your dabbling in spiritualism? You will probably run from one extreme to the other and become an ardent believer soon! Actually it is a phase every intelligent person seems to go through in some way or another, tho' personally I do Not like spiritualism itself. That doesn't mean I believe it to be a fraud; but rather that it seems to me to be sort of low and underhand. Straight-forward mysticism I have a leaning to; esoteric doctrines and so forth but the hit-or-miss business of messing about with what appear to me to be surely the lowest and 'earthbound' creatures of the spirit-world, is distasteful and nasty."

This is an astonishing thing among so many fantasy fans, that they will swallow almost anything you hand them providing the language is right! Tell Michael that some unfortunate clairvoyant is working with "earthbound spirits" and he'll run a mile! Actually, Michael, we are most unlikely to become ardent believers soon, because we are not "searching frantically for a philosophy of life" (we gave that up some time ago). What we are looking for is EVIDENCE, and we don't give a hang how low or underhand are the channels it comes through.

And we try to start out with as few assumptions as possible. Personally, we haven't the faintest idea how we would know an "earthbound spirit" if we met one - outside of a Weird Tale - and we can confess to no beliefs one way or the other about the "spirit world". This business about "straight-forward mysticism" is very mystifying to us. We thought that mysticism was bound, by definition, to be crooked, since it claims to convey transcendent ideas by language based on everyday experience.

Sorry, Michael, but though we're quite prepared to read the great men of "Unknown", on Words of Power and magic lamps, on Elementals and fairies, we'd be very much shocked if, one fine day, you showed us evidence of them! We trust that that doesn't sound too much like treachery. One thing we refuse to do is to allow this curious structure of notions to prejudice our estimation of evidence that we actually have.

On the very inadequate basis of a mere preliminary survey, we might add, with all due reservations, that while there certainly seems to be in spiritualism evidence pointing somewhere, the thing it doesn't seem to indicate is the presence of "spirits", of any intelligence.

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Looking at the quaint results of the Author Poll we're tempted to think that the Snag overrates the Mind of the Fan. Campbell pulls in twice the votes of Wells, five times those of Stapledon! Binder ranks $1\frac{1}{2}$ times higher than Stapledon! Need we say anything?

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In the remote contingency of someone feeling an urge to differ from some judgment of the Snag, that low-plane manifestation can be got at in a private way via R.G. Medhurst, 27, Owlstone Rd., Cambridge. If you wish to set about him publicly, we can only suggest that you seek the ready hospitality of the sheets of Messrs. Webster, Burke, or Rennison - or even of one known as CHRISTOPHER SAMUEL YOUNG:

To Whom this Sheet is Dedicated.

being - temporarily at least - the last issue to be published by CSYoud, 244 Desboro
Road, Eastleigh, Hants.

BLITZ

The fire was a red bank in the grate. Soon it would collapse in the centre, and there were two hotly-contrasted schools of thought, one advocating immediate replenishment while the other, legs moving uncomfortably in the scarlet heat, effectively protested. We sat in a semi-circle of chairs with army blankets thrown over our shoulders, dreamily retailing stale obscenities. Beer winked comfortably in the firelight, and Newman was sluggishly wolfing his third pork pie. It was cosy and intimate in the firelight. There was a sleepy atmosphere of familiarity and peace. Next door they were noisily playing pontoon by the light of a candle.

The electric lights had gone half an hour before. We had watched them flicker, die down to glowing filaments, finally black out altogether. Outside four flares hung in frosty air, shells cracking round them and tiny red suns describing apathetic parabolas against the stars. Bombers surged constantly overhead, swinging out for another run-in on Southampton. Already there was a dull glow in the southern sky.

Captain Leigh swept in with an entourage of bustle. It was obvious immediately, by the exultance in his big brown eyes, that he had thought of something brilliant. Recalling his propensity for playing with unexploded land-mines I shuddered a little. Fears, however, were groundless. There were no time-bombs to detonate. Volunteers were wanted for a small party to penetrate the blitz and give any assistance necessary to the Southampton Home Guard.

We collected in the stark gloom of the Drill Hall, checking over gas-masks, tin-hats and ammunition. Leigh was depressingly serious. Names were taken by the Orderly Officer in charge, in order that the identity of possible missing might be clearly established. Leigh warned us.

"There's still time for anyone with doubts to back out. It's a bit sticky down there, and you may see some pretty horrible sights. If you want to eat, remember to keep clear of your uniform."

In ten stomachs the half-digested recollections of pork pies heaved in anticipation. Then we were straggling out of the Drill Hall to H.Q., feeling the frosty air against our faces the more vividly because of that throbbing crimson on the horizon.

At H.Q. I was fitted up with a greatcoat. The owner was not eager, but not averse to lending it. "Rather you than me", he said. Privately I shared his discretion. But I shrugged heroically. As well to be bombed for a lion as a lamb.

Only one car was available. I was instructed to secure another, and such was my mental condition that, despite knowing the place well, I knocked two other shop-keepers up before finding our Transport Officer. When I did find him he was very dubious about everything. Only he or Alan (his son) could use the car. Manfully I set out to find Alan. When I found him he explained that he had had little sleep for two nights and had to attend a Home Guard cadre in the morning. Then he came back with me to get the car.

Despite an embarrassing but understandable reluctance on his father's part to let him go he got the car out eventually. There were four of us. Alan himself, lance corporal, Corporal Newman, Volunteer Nutter, young and idiotic, and my corporal self. In the other car had gone Captains Woodley and Leigh, Corporals Harry Collins, Baster and Tommy 'Fright, and Volunteer Carpenter. Recruit Cook was cursing us for leaving him behind.

We swung out on to the main east road and were stopped immediately. She was young, pretty, appealing and desolate. She had to get to Romsey. Alan was courteous and apologetic, explaining that we were for Southampton and, anyway, full

up. She wouldn't mind sitting on our knees. We were very regretful, but..... She could pay us. Alan snorted, and we drove on reminiscing.

Alan handled the car beautifully. Soon we were in Chandlersford, and swinging right towards the scarlet horizon. We passed the heavy gun emplacements with anxious exhortations to Alan not to be frightened if the guns went off. The glow was deepening. We passed fire engines travelling at a snail's pace and came down the wide sweep of the upper reaches of the Avenue well in the middle of the road. At Burgess Road crossing the traffic lights were still functioning, to our amazement. "We'll have to be carefull of stranded trams", said Alan, and simultaneously grazed one at thirty miles an hour.

The fires were breaking up, and we could see large blazes ahead on either side. Guns fired desultorily as we neared the town itself, but it was obvious that we were coming in during a lull. The lull broke with startling intensity as we turned right off the main road to circumvent the centre of the blitz. Bombs whistled and splashed on our left, bringing mental pictures of telescoped cars.

There was no moon but hundreds of tiny blazes mingled with the main conflagrations to light up our path. A detached, villa-type house was blazing, and as we passed it we looked in with morbid curiosity. There was only the shell left, and all the little paraphernalia of pictures and chairs and curtains might never have existed. But there was no-one in the street, no-one taking the slightest notice. I recalled Eastleigh, the Fire Brigade turning out to deal with a bombed shed, and didn't feel like smiling.

From that point the fires were continuous, some lining the road and others further back in the tangle of houses. I was completely lost, my meagre knowledge of the town confounded by the shifting lambent glow. Alan was serenely capable, swerving occasionally. "That was a crater." At my side Natty Mutter was singing monotonously as the bombs fell, "Bang away Lulu, bang away Lulu". The rhythm was diverting for a time, then excruciating. "For Christ's sake lay him out", Newman called from the front. We scuffled feebly, like puppies in a forest fire.

I asked Alan where we were. "Hill Lane", he replied, "I came this way on cadre this afternoon. The corner just ahead had a bomb in last week's raid." We eyed the corner with interest. It did not exist. In its place was a field of rubble. "Guess it's had some more bombs", Alan remarked shakily.

"This must be like going over the top", interjected Newman. We debated the point academically. "I've always thought machine-gun fire would be the worst", I said. "No", Alan declared emphatically, "bayonet-fighting." I argued its obsolescence, from Tom Wintringham and World Review. "They're teaching us on cadre that the bayonet will win this war", countered Alan. I was indignant, as usual, against reactionary authority, and said rude things about the cadre and all its connections. My invective was lost in the grind of a bomb.

We came into the road leading to Southampton H.Q., Hamilton House, missing another crater by inches. Hamilton House was curiously twisted in appearance, sheltering beside the stygian bulk of the Empire Cinema. Inside, this strange, almost 4th-dimensional twisting was accentuated by a muffling blackness. Curtains flapped in odd places and nothing seemed to run straight. One saw, seemingly remote beyond infinite passages, fires smouldering dimly in grates. A false step brought one into a circle of men, silent as corpses in dim firelight. Groping to find the right door, and a comparative flood of light from a storm-lantern and many candles. The room was full of people sitting round an immense fire, or making tea. The Southampton Commander was ecstatically gratefully. "It's grand of you, grand", he repeated. "Make these boys some tea, Freda. Come and see the parachute flare we shot down."

We admired the flare duly, Newman offering intelligent remarks which the rest of us didn't understand. The silk of the parachute was soft and white, and the flare itself looked like a row of tin cans. We backed out and waited for tea. Freda handed it to us, smiling. She was plump, brunette and thirtyish, with horn-rimmed

spectacles and slightly-protuding tooth. Her smile was confiding and rather sensual. I basked in the warmth of it.

The guard-room was displayed, more solid than our own and decorated with nudes, doubtless for reasons of art. I went out on guard at the rear of the building and watched the flame pall drifting over the town. The twin cylinders of the power-house were etched phallically against the heat, obstinately unhit. As I leaned on my rifle the throb of bombers returned and I retired hastily to the doorway of the armoury. The question of being surrounded by such a barrier of high explosive material hardly occurred to me. A direct hit from a bomb would not require the added incentive of grenades, AW bombs and Molotoff Cocktails. Bombs shrieked through the air and I crouched inanely, terror evenly engaged with a refusal to look ridiculous by hugging the ground. Then they were over and I walked nonchalantly out. The third time I was sufficiently acclimatised to adopt a strained belly-down recumbency, like the intermediate stage in an arms bend exercise. The whistle crashed down the scale to a grinding roar and the floor heaved, rolling me over threateningly. I got up nervously in time to meet the flood of enquiries. It was established that a bomb had fallen next door on the Empire and we were all hysterically cheerful about it. The barman examined his canteen, and called us in to see it. "Look", he said happily, pointing to a small hill of smashed bottles and glasses. "They did the same bloody thing last Saturday. Bugger the bastards!"

I went in for another cup of tea, and when I stumbled out again my relief reported a fire in the houses some thirty yards away. We watched it blossom out of a bedroom window, and reported. There was nothing to be done, but Leigh and Tommy Wright went down to help. A downstairs room was cleared, a canary and Sunday joint being rescued. Leigh confided afterwards that it was bigger than his missus could afford. Dashing out with the canary they found the owner of the house dolefully surveying the incendiarianism which, had he had his wits about him, he might have prevented at the beginning. "Anything else?" Leigh gasped. "Well," he ruminated, "there's the piano...." The fire spread voraciously along the terrace, remaining dangerously constant with regard to our ammunition. Smoke billowed futilely out of two chimneys, which leaned perilously outwards.

The Blitz was dying down, if the fires weren't. Leigh, Harry Collins and Alan disappeared on an inspection of damage and returned serious. The rest of us were clamoring to get away and finally got permission. Even under the strain I could not repress a twinge of satisfaction that I, the despised god-forsaken intellectual, should be put in charge. We trocked up towards the Civic Centre, straggling along the middle of the road.

Just at the corner a house had been laid flat by a bomb. It looked infinitely sadder and more tragic than the fires all round, which were at least warm on a very cold night. The Civic Centre seemed to have suffered no further damage, and I heaved a very personal sigh of relief which had been repressed all night. Concrete blocks simulated antiquity on the lawns, and a huge crater blocked the road. Just beyond the Art School was brilliantly on fire, its flaming interior attracting a larger and more catholic crowd than it had ever done in peace. Outlined against the fire were groups of people hugging a few blankets or an armchair. One moved unobtrusively amongst them, hearing everywhere indications of bewilderment and annoyance. "What shall we do?" was the key-phrase. I saw no weeping.

One wall was still standing of a brewery, and a pole sticking out from it was burning at the end. People were amused. "Put that light out", they called. A hose ran past the non-existent front door and, from a leak, squirted a pitiful jet on the smouldering interior. We beat round into the High Street.

Here the damage was catastrophic. Fires in the big stores ran the whole length with only sporadic breaks. The firemen were heroic but hopeless. We worked further down. As we reached the Regal Cinema, still miraculously untouched with a church beside it, a wall just ahead collapsed outwards, flinging blocks to unbelievable dis-

tances. From that point on the street was a twisted river of rubble and wood, with torn books and trinkets woven into it. We stumbled over it in army boots through an ever-thickening cloud of smoke. BOOTS, we saw, was untouched apart from broken windows. We pushed ahead into the smoke, and were lost except for vocal contact.

The smoke was choking and blinding, with black snouts and fire embers floating in its tawny fog. We agreed to turn back, and for a moment I was lost, choking and stumbling helplessly over the grotesque stone. Chaos all round, and the shifting, insubstantial rubble beneath. Eighteen, unreasonably, seemed an uncommonly young age to die at. Then the smoke thinned into the steady drizzle of spray from the hoses.

Back up the High Street, avoiding leaning walls. Two policemen fell in with us for a time. "On duty?" We assented. "Watching for looters, I s'pose? Orders to shoot on sight?" We agreed importantly. "Bloody good thing, too." I attempted a discussion on the contrasting ethical values involved in picking up a chemise from a store supporting several millionaires, and the violation of small, bombed-out houses, but could see it was not going to be successful. The other policeman, young and well-fed, spoke. "I don't believe in Hell, but by Christ the people who started this will roast in torment." I saw what he meant. Curiously I heard no talk of reprisals. All were too numbed and shattered to want anything but a respite. Not that they wanted peace. The possibility of enslavement to a type that could run the length of a town dropping bombs so relentlessly on civilian targets stiffened them if anything.

The Forum was intact, but a thin pyre of smoke rose from the top. All along that block fires runched steadily and, with walls leaning outwards all the way, Newman and I detoured round the back. We passed buses and trams scorched like living organisms. Newman is going to be a pilot. "Swine!" he grunted.

We wanted to get round somehow to the Bargate. I suggested cutting across the Park, and we set out. Even the trees and bushes had been stripped by bomb blast, and craters were everywhere. At the other side of the Park, in a street of purely private houses, at least one in twenty was ablaze. A chest-of-drawers, sheets, blankets, two arm-chairs and a mattress huddled on the grass. We walked on, ruminating.

Back in the streets we cut through narrow thoroughfares in an endeavour to get through. Finally, surrounded by fire on three sides and with beer foaming along the gutters from a blazing public-house, we gave it up. We trudged back, my feet growing sorer and wearier at every foot and every inch of rubble. Nutty was stationed outside HQ, warning passers-by to keep to the right. A cyclist told him to go to hell, and he had the satisfaction of seeing him hit a crater.

The night passed rather quickly, even after the All Clear had been sounded on one tentative siren. Hoses were working now, and the fires seemed at last possible of control. At 6.30 we set out again for home. We were all too sleepy to take stock of damage. We hit a crater and the springs creaked. The houses still standing looked very cold in their casing of frost. As we moved out the fires behind deserted again their component parts, and coalesced into a dull, cloud-reflected glare. The engine hummed peacefully.

Back to the Drill Hall, and a guard sleepily emerging from blankets. All very curious, but we were too tired to say much. That's the point where the physical beats the psychological. Just now we weren't even remembering the flattened houses, the steel girders with the charred red "3d. and 6d. Woolv--", and the wash-stand and easy chair outlined against the glare of climbing flame. We weren't even saying, "If people let another war happen after this man won't deserve to survive." In the grate the fire was low but red.

The next night the bombers returned, striding with iron feet through the burning ruins. Again the air-torn howl of bombs and the pallid refulgence of deadly flares, and from Coventry and Bristol, Birmingham and London, help came to the doomed city. Their own towns nashed ruins behind them, they rode into the bomb glare. Vos saluto!
I, at any rate, am proud of my countrymen.

Produced by John F. Burke, 57 Beauclair Drive, Liverpool 15, and circulated by JMRosenblum, who has the impertinence to call it "Pseudo Psally", for which he will never be forgiven.

WHY? It is time that some person with an analytical mind (like my own) made some attempt to investigate this absurd business of voting for the best article in a certain fan magazine. What is the purpose of this ridiculous custom? Fan magazines, as all should know by now - the editors most of all - are run by voluntary efforts, which either come in or do not come in, just as the writer feels inclined. It is something like...well, actually, there is no simile of sufficient power to describe the effort required to obtain material from that lazy bunch of creatures called fans. Few fanmag editors are in a position to pick and choose, and even when they can do so their choice is restricted to a few items. Why, then, go through this farce of voting for the best article in the issue? What happens when the list is drawn up? Does the editor at once write away to the winner asking for another contribution? Very rarely, and if he does it is very probable that nothing will happen. Should the fan be an onliging fellow (very rare specimen indeed) he may try to churn something out, and in all probability said product will be strained, artificial, and far below standard, since fans, like swing musicians and great writers, only work when smitten by inspiration. In nine cases out of ten, however, there is complete silence, and the fanmag just goes on with whatever material it has to hand. If the readers don't like it, that's just too bad. I don't suppose the opinion of even a vast body of readers (ha ha!) would stop Sam Youd or myself printing whatever we felt like printing. So why waste time on these trivialities? If you like an article, by all means write in and say so, but don't vote for the best in the issue, unless you're one of those lunatics who like referendums (referenda?).

WE NEED articles and all the other stuff asked for in the last issue. We have received a very small amount of material, so what about a little support? There's a poem from JERennison coming up, and we have one or two other stalwarts who may be provoked into activity, but we can never have too much. Doug Webster is all in favour of an all-poetry sheet, or one with short poems and paragraphs. Is there any market for poetry in this benighted land of beer and bombs? A few comments, please.

WILLIAMS Reading through an old issue of NOVAE TERRAE the other day, THE we came across an astonishing forecast by Eric C. Williams PROPHECT. in his article, "Idle Chatter in the Vaults". In this he mentioned the demise of N.T. in 1939, just before the second World War started. As one an' all will realise, this prophecy has been only too well justified, and we must pat Eric on the back for this truly remarkable achievement. Any more of these, and he'll be taking the bread and butter out of the mouth of H.G. Wells.

GANS T.. Those readers of WEIRD TALES who have been trying to couple FIELD the names of Gans T. Field and Seabury Quinn should be interested to note that under Field's latest story, "The Dreadful Rabbits" is the line: "by the author of 'The Witch's Cat' and 'Fearful Rock'". Now hark back a little and remember who wrote 'Fearful Rock'!

THE MOCK WEBSTER'S SONG

"Will you read a little faster?" said a Stefan to his pal,
"There's a vombis close behind us, and he's rarin' for this Sal.
See how avidly the werewolves and the zombies on us sprang!
They are itching just to know you - will you come and join the gang?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the gang?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't you join the gang?"

"You will have the greatest honour, you'll be famous very soon,
When they pack us in a spaceship and they shoot us to the moon!"
But the pal went pale: "Nay, nay, I say!" as a vampire showed his fang.
Though he loved all fandom dearly, yet he would not join the gang.
Would not, could not, would not, could not, would not join the gang.
Would not, could not, would not, could not, could not join the gang.

"What matters it if we are mad?" the doughty fan replied.
"There are kindred souls a-plenty, as you'll see once you're inside.
There are Marids and there's Martians - all of whom the authors sang..
Then do not quake, you wriggley snake, but come and join the gang.
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the gang?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't you join the gang?"

D.W.

TOPICAL TUNE: "I'm Nobody's Baby", as Adam Link said.

MARTIAN INVASION: The "Listener" for 2nd. January 1941 contains an interesting review of a new book dealing with the almost forgotten American radio scare over the broadcast of H.G. Wells' "War of the Worlds", dealing with several psychological aspects of the matter and giving percentages of the various classes of people who were stampeded.

MISCELLANEOUS. HGW's latest, "The Babes in the Darkling Wood", is an interesting, provocative dialogue that should appeal to all thinking fans. (That doesn't leave very many). Although Wells is at times almost ridiculous in some things, he raises many points worthy of attention. He also makes some veiled remarks about Aldous Huxley that he developed in a recent article for the "Sunday Dispatch". I have an idea "Brave New World" is more likely to become a classic than any of HG's books.....We will strike away from fantasy, or at least from one of fantasy's main exponents, to add our regrets to those already offered for the death of James Joyce, one of the greatest experimentalists of our age. Comments in the daily press show a woeful lack of understanding of his work, and some of them are only prevented from saying he was ridiculous by a certain artificial respect for the dead.....Pleasing to note that the experiment of publishing "New Writing", the intellectuals' happy hunting ground, as a Penguin 6d., has been so successful that it is now to be issued once a month.Arthur Clarke is issuing an excellent sort of chain letter to keep a small body of fans in touch with one another. Will any of the "Red Bull" clique who have not yet been contacted by Ego, because of change of address or anything of that very frequent sort, get in touch with him at Colwyn Bay.

MORE MOONSHIN NEXT MONTH IF ONLY YOU LAZYSQUIRTS WILL SEND IN SOME MATERIAL FOR IT.