

Those of you who do not know that this sheet is stencilled by Douglas Webster at Idlewild, Fountainhall Road, Aberdeen, must be a pitiful minority. JMR duplicates.

This which you hold in your hands being the last Gent, I take this opportunity to confound Art Williams (see TT4) by producing not four but six pages of Letters &, I hope, no material whatsoever. There is nothing, I think, of any relevance to stf., and if I can choose nicely, nothing of any relevance to anything. We then pack up and depart into mistiness, sniggering absent-mindedly at the frothings of Grunt-Leader Carnell & Groan-Leader Holmes (neither of whom can stand the sight of anything produced by Webster). We also exchange our ego for an editorial "we" by taking command of FANTAST, about which, in anticipation of this happy event, we have said many complimentary things in the past. All this who read this are advised to subscribe at once: if they are friends of ours & don't do so, they'd better start thinking quick.

CSYoud: "Michael tells me that Fido is too overloaded for a Warbull this month, so you will have to do the explaining to the gang. That being so, would you mind printing a list of people to whom issues are owed, as follows:-

- Hanson (3): Clarke (2): Hopkins (2): Forster (5): Williams (1): Smith (3):
- Gabrielson (1): Parr (3): Robb (1): Ellis (3): Skeel (3): Lewis (1): Hodgkins (USA--3): Swisher (USA--1): Medhurst (4): Needham (1): Veney (AUST.--4): Macdonald (1):
- Bulmer (1): McIlwain (3): Kuslan (USA--3): Birchby (3): Ellis (HJ--3): Doughty (3):
- Rennison (3): R.Lane (5).

Please announce that anyone who finds a fault should write to me explaining what has been missed out." [Please note this request. Those mentioned (apart from exchanges) will receive the numbers of issues indicated should Fay happen to last long enough. Material, needless to say, is not only urgently but desperately needed/

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SMITH wrote, before seeing the June Gent: "which brings us round to the last issue of the dear old Gent. After studying Ragatzy's reasoning I wish to start some of my own on the same lines. That that is is, that that is not is not; for that that is not is not that that is, nor is that that is that that is not; it follows that that that is is, that that that is not is not, that that that is is that that is not that that is not, that that that is not is that that is that that is not..... Medhurst I have already answered here and elsewhere. Rest assured that once having drawn the sword I shall not sheath it until the lights of Europe and of Cambridge shall once more be lighting the unexplored avenues and unturning the unturned stones so that this green jewel set in a silver sea shall not go down before the forces of that Wicked Man (Medhurst) and all our yesterdays but light the way to dusty death."

[This particularly rapid unintelligible patter Isn't generally heard, and if it is it doesn't matter.]

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Many moons ago, the Webster spent a letter or two arguing Fort with La Rissolle; by dint of unbelievable ingenuousness the former evoked the following --- ERIC F. RUSSELL: "You've missed much if you've read no Fort. He isn't just a scientific heckler. He's decidedly atheistic as well, and his wit is bitingly malicious. You'd enjoy his very lurid description of the Mont Pelee disaster, perhaps the worst in the annals of the human race. After devoting a couple of paragraphs to powerful sketches of falling trees, boiling seas, the onward rush of lava, the roar of falling masonry, the howls and screams of 30,000 parboiled bodies, etc., etc., he casually ends up, "Somewhere, a sparrow fell and according to conventional theologians, this was noted." He enjoys himself with that time South African farmers spent three months praying for rain, at the end of which time, according to Fort, God got fed up, told the angels to see to it, and they, knowing no better, sent the whole three months

2/ supply in one dollop. A couple of lakes and an ocean dropped, sweeping away thousands of cattle, bursting bridges, wrecking towns, leaving a death-roll of several hundreds. His malice is sweetest when recording the advent of Einstein's theories, and how those astronomers who favoured Einstein looked at the sky and found evidence to support him, while those against him looked at the sky and found evidence against. Says Fort, "If we had a spectroscope, it would be for us."\*\*\*\*\*Touching upon your other paragraph anent Forteana, I guess you ain't quite got the hang of it. Us guys don't just heckle science and no more. Firstly, we draw differences between Science and Dogmatic Science - the latter is our especial prey. (A few scientists are Forteans, believe it or not.) [I do - I know my scientists!] Secondly, we're constructive enough to have plenty of theories of our own, with data to back 'em. Thirdly, we don't offer our theories as God-given facts, as do Dogmatic Scientists. Moreover, I think you give the scientists more credit than they deserve. If you ever bother to look deeply enough into the source of most of the world's inventions you'll be surprised to find how many of them have been attributed to a scientific world which, in actuality, was at the time trying to get the inventor across the barrel for a larruping. You mention the automobile, for instance. Well, that was invented, or the internal combustion engine was invented by Gottlieb Daimler, a German mechanic --with some parallel credit due to Benz, another German mechanic. Neither of them were scientists, though the scientific world has since stolen their thunder by tagging them "scientists". Marconi wasn't a scientist at the time of his first successful experiments, neither was Edison, nor Bell, nor the Wright Brothers. Harvey, who discovered and demonstrated the circulation of the blood, and is now recorded as "a scientist", was actually pilloried by the scientists of London Surgical Society. (Dogmatic Science again!) You'll find that most of the world's basic inventions and discoveries have been made by unknown, independent, and unrecognised research-workers having no connection with official science, and that usually these workers have received more scorn than kudos from scientists until the truth of their discoveries could no longer be denied - whereupon their very detractors have stolen their thunder by listing them as "scientists" and thus giving "science" credit it never deserved. An ancient trick culled from the religious world which, finding a heretic successful in his heresy, despite victimisation, then cannonises him and claims him as their own. "He Was a Christian" - long after he is dead and unable to deny it. Thus, "Joan of Arc, once heartily and thoroughly cursed by the R.C. Church, is now an R.C. saint, by order of the Pope! Dogmatic Science is nothing but Roman Catholicism with its pants down and its genitals exposed."

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THE THINGS THEY SAY... Ken Johnson: "... very busy at work, yeah I wish Hitler was still in the paint business ... " Ron Holmes: "The mentioning of Christianity stall was what we authors call a "hook".... " Marion Eadie: "...ya big nyaff ..." Rex Knight: "... congratulate you on the persistence of your epistolary style ..." [I think this succeeds in being maddeningly irrelevant to anything/

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Dave McIlwain: "Gent is good as usual, but I notice no boost for Esperanto. Why is this? Sabotage, that's wot it is - I'll inform the Gestapo. [Oh dear, what have I done?]\*ps- owing to enemy action, there will be no more PAN PUBLICATIONS. [And in a later letter...] No more PAN PUBS I fear. Whole outfit blätzed last month. I will know for certain soon."

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ERIC HOPKINS: "Re Parr's query re bad language & literature, I think it is possible to accurately describe average common life without using the actual words. (Unless 'tis plainly reportage.) So much can be done by inference, but not by the substitution of some middle-class epithet which would only make the story ridiculous. In NEW WRITING are one or two stories which use the actual words, particul-

3/ arly one about a builder's day in which the foreman & a boy let each other have it neat. [ "Boss" by Leslie Halward: an entertaining piece, which is more than can be said of several I've read in NW. ] But of course, the good writer is not concerned merely with "a detailed, accurate account of a working man's private life" and so Ragatzy's premise should never arise. If the writer sets himself the task of reporting verbatim a fragment of a working man's experience he cannot avoid repeating the swearing because he will have to repeat everything else, but if he is a true writer and fixes his attention upon the essentials he need not introduce a single oath. Swearing is only a superficiality and great working class novels can be written without it. Why fix on the working man, anyway? [ Just a convenient instance. ]

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....THIS BATH QUESTION....

FOR:- SAM YOUND explains the fundamentals: "Eric Hopkins is worse than a novice at bath-reading. I have a horrid suspicion that he and Johnny are of the type who plunge into a bath, and almost at once rise like Venus, dripping from the foam. I believe they spend the intervening two seconds in frantic ablutions, which probably slow down the heart action and take some months off their lives. [ I agree: a thoroughly disgusting practice. But wait till you see the Ego's ghastly heathen ideas, or the awful rites performed by such eminent authors as Russell & Craig.. ] Furthermore, Eric at least seems to be given to jumping in while the water is boiling: folks with more sensitive skins are careful to have the water luke-warm before insertion, and then to turn on the heat, stepping it up until the steam whistles through their eye-brows. Naturally, when the water cools one administers more hot water. This can be carried on almost indefinitely, although it is true that the water tends to deceive. Turning the tap off when the heat gets unbearable, the sudden movement contacts a lurking layer of cold water, which swirls round the naked form like rain-sodden trousers. I do not believe Rita reads Railway Time Tables, even in bath. But I know someone who takes a cold bath every morning all the year round. He went to school with me, and casually remarks in mid-December that it was a bit of a job to break the ice this morning!" [ An amazingly healthy devil, I suppose? ]

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MICHAEL ROSENBLUM enlarges on material: "P.S. Large Gent O.K. [ I hope so! ] -- read almost anything in bath, depending more on condition & binding. Don't read books in good collection but read books, magazines etc. not in my collection & that I needn't worry about. Keep a special book-jacket for the purpose."

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And BILL TEMPLE puts in a word for idiosyncracies: "The "bath" business must have started when Sam Yound remarked in public that I had no spare time except in my bath. [ Right - you should be proud of what you've started. ] Actually I'm very busy in my bath. I also read, & go in for the more heavy type of literature. I started with Morley's "Dutch Republic", worked my way through Gibbons' "Decline & Fall of the Roman Empire", & am now in the 14th. Edition of the "Encyclopedia Britannica". You see, I can never bring myself to get out of a hot bath, & have been known to spend weeks in one. Joan, failing to get me out by hammering at the door, used to batter it down, but the constant door replacement got expensive, & anyway you can't buy wood now. She resorted to feeding me through a tube. It's no good taking short books, like "Gone With The Wind", with you, for you finish it too soon & have to get out. I always take works of several volumes. I recline on my back balancing the spare volumes on my head, & rest the volume in use on the two taps. (A delicious wrinkle, this!) I always turn the pages with my toes, which is a healthy exercise, invented by Darwin, I believe." [ Amazing. ]

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AGAINST:- JACK BANKS reminisces: "As to your low personal questions, I don't know that I've ever read in the bath. If I'm at the cinema or theatre, I generally walk out during the National Anthem, unless stuck in the middle of a row. Got an aunt (a

4/ Fascist minded person, tut tut) who walked out of our local pier theatre last year, during King, and said to a sailor or someone in uniform who tried to stop her, "Take your hands off me, you little worm". I know someone else who says he only stands up out of sympathy for a nation that can have an old battle hymn for a national anthem."

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JOHN CRAIG goes into the finer sensuous details: "And now to this bath business.

Class me as inclassifiable. I imagine that this is some sort of a gag.

[Sir!] I regard reading in bath as a barbarous practice, the bath should be reserved for sensuous meditation, unless it's a cold bath to remove a hangover. Also, never having been to Hollywood or taken part in an American film I have never, in real life, come across a bath that presented any reading facilities. [See above for some constructive examples of ingenuity in this respect, you lazy devil. Of course, CSY forgets one efficient method for keeping warm in a bath, namely, fill up a hot-water bottle and take it in with you: this cannot fail.] Whilst in soak, however, I should raise no objection to being read to, in soothing tones. For this I would choose something after the fashion of an old fashioned recipe book containing descriptions of how to cook large porterhouse steaks smothered in onions - and rum baba made with hundreds of eggs and pints of double cream. Sic transia gluttony - I like my belly."

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DONALD SMITH, of course, wants to do something else: "I don't read in my bath at all. The very idea of it! Every true born British citizen sings in his bath, and so do I. Or do you mean "read in Bath"? If so, I have never been there, so I don't know." [Bah!]

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GEORGE HEDHURST, in the midst of addresses, dates, "Dear Doggie"s, &c., has a wiggley integral-shaped "P.S. Don't read in bath, merely soak in it. [Good God - another of them?] Did I ever tell you the tale of my "God Save the king" reaction though? [The uncapitalised king belongs to RGM.] It involves assault and battery!" [Well, tell me then, boy, tell me. Remember: Never do the dirty on a fellow Markovian - try to be a decent sort of swine.]

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MARION RADIE is, I think, a possible convert to the Cause: "...Anyway, why this anxiety to know what people read in baths? Do people read in baths? I mean, do they really collect half a dozen cushions, pile them into the bath, balance a tin of Quality Street on the taps, and then get in to recline and read? Personally, I'd rather read in bed. But then folks are queer. Or do you mean, what do I read while scrubbing the grime out of my pores? Yes, now I come to think of it that seems more likely. Sorry to disappoint you, but I don't. I prefer to occupy myself by reciting "Tam o' Shanter" (entire). It usually lasts me out. If it's not too personal, what do you read? [I must confess I found myself getting through "Alice in Wonderland" the other week, but didn't find it congenial. Last night, SPACEWAYS. I was 90% asleep while reading DAW's article, but through long experience didn't drop the magazine into the murkiness. My father read THE WOMAN'S PICTORIAL in his bath not long ago. Mps?] I'd like, now I think of it, to read a book by Beverly Nichols - any one will do - so that at the end I could have the intense satisfaction of symbolically drowning it. After first filling its eyes with soap." [Marion, you are a kindred soul: kindly fill its nose & mouth with soap, with my love. Tweak its nose too, please.]

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ARTHUR CLARKE is by far the worst of the philistines: "This bath business' is beyond me...I can truthfully say that when I am in a bath my main consideration is how quickly I can get out of it again. I never stay in more than ten minutes, as Bill Temple will confirm. I used to get annoyed with him for luxuriating for hours in tepid water, back in the dear old Flat days. [Egosity: you should be ashamed to admit it. Full sympathy to Bill, & I trust that he will find a combination of the Youd and Webster methods conducive to longer & merrier soaks.] I regard bathing, like

5/ eating and sleeping, as annoying things to be dealt with as quickly as possible. Truly this man does not enjoy the simple things in life. In the same category I put having one's hair cut. Anyway, it would be too much of a risk to take any book into the bath with one, even a current AMAZING....still less any of the mags devoted to what Eric calls "eerie lust"! The poor thing would get limp in no time and would have to be run through awringer.\*\*\*Hell, who started all this, and why? Me. Why? You'd be surprised, my friend.]

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JULIAN PARR shows no spirit of adventure: "I don't read in the bath, thank you very much, sir." [Same as all the other unimaginative geezers; nuts.]

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ERIC RUSSELL wafts us to foreign climes: "No, I don't read in my bath, and never have done. I treasure books too highly to risk dropping one in the mud. Sometimes I sing though, treating the whole surrounding area to a mad-bullish version of Onie Kai Maoli or some other exotic Polynesian piece. 18, sweet, and with an elastic belly is what I look like when I get out of the bath. I'm exceedingly keen on these Polynesian tunes, often stand draped in nothing but the towel, and perform the real and highly suggestive version of the hula hula to the sound of steel guitars coming over the radio. I don't give a hoot for jazz and suchlike junk, but I always was a sucker for the plaintive will of steel guitars, the throb of well-strummed ukeleles, and the rhythmic swish of grass skirts. When in N.Y.C., I spent a couple of hours in Ringling Brothers' Circus just watching a team of pukka performers, and learning how to make my navel do figure-eights. Horace L. Gold and Otis Adelbert Kline admirably witnessed my own seductive hula-ing when I spent one night at the latter's flat, very drunk. Gold's daria and scrumptuous fiancée (now his wife) joined in and narrowly escaped a raping. Gold passed out shortly after, and me and Otis tried to put him to bed, but our legs wouldn't stay stiff while we lifted the body. So we went and dug up another bottle, upon which the corpse revived and loudly demanded alcohol. I can't quite remember what happened after that, and neither can Gold, but I believe my hula was performed with just the right abandon." [This leads EFR to other reminiscences, such as the saga of Kuttner and the Six Foot sausage, and the time a fellow author's wife .... well, we'll skip them. Some other time, maybe.]

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THE UNCOOPERATIVE:- ANTON RAGATZY has the best excuse: "The neighbourhood, in fact most districts in Stoke-on-Trent, contains houses of somewhat antedeluvian aspects, and only a small proportion of them contain baths. I have not yet been billeted at a house with one, and so cannot answer your query."

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MAURICE HANSON has a new angle: "...two points to comment upon in the June issue. (1) Did you ever try reading under a hot shower? Moreover a shower on which the temperature control handle gradually slips from hot to cold? (2) It's too bad about the phoney Earl Singleton. All too fans commit suicide. It's the fan-mags that do that." [Your (1) does seem irksome. However, extensive experience through the years, with shower-baths in all the remotest wilds of Scotland, has shown me that single-controllers are the goods. The really fiendish thing is to be caught with an unfamiliar two-control-handle one which alternated for no obvious reason between scalding-hot & icy, at the slightest touch.]

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ERIC NEEDHAM has another: "I have you heah, sah. Not in 4 years have I had a bath. I go swimming at least twice a week [Gosh - another ice-breaker?], so never avail myself of an opportunity to read something in a bath. But I think the "Water Babies" by Kingsley should be good for aquatic reading. "WB" contains some of the most illogical and delightful logic I ever read, and I don't need a bath to read anything." [Which is about all there is of that; all being sublimely irrelevant

6/ and taking up much more room than I'd expected. Which is a pity, since I had some most amusing examples of The Things They Do. People do queer things. As to the significance of 'this bath business', the revealing data herein gathered will obviously be of enormous value psychologically - when a real psychologist comes to study the mind of the fan. I'll do it myself someday./

HARRY WARNER mentioned (30th April): "This war is at present a rather funny---peculiar, that is--thing. Counting up, I find that of the three dozen items on the first two pages of today's Baltimore Sun, thirty-three deal more or less directly with the War. It's much the same throughout every newspaper: war, war, war; convoys, convoys, convoys; brute Hitler, brute Hitler, brute Hitler. But oddly enough, the people here in Hagerstown and I presume all over the country don't talk much about it. I was Elsewhere during 1917, but unless I've been grievously misinformed, there was war hysteria then. Today we're at the same point we were in the first month of 1917, and nowhere except in the papers is there war hysteria. Movies about the war aren't popular, magazines steer rather clear of it, you hear lots of news over the radio but no plays or anything of the sort dealing with it--the whole situation is amazing. Possibly it's due to the feeling of older people that "This is where we came in"--and that it's no use discussing something that's fated to happen every twenty-five years or so. /Whereas, instead of considering any superstition about anything being "fated", they should discuss it as hard as they can, & act upon their conclusions./ Well, the way things are going the next World Stf. Convention is bound to be held in London or Paris or Berlin, depending on H. Hitler's fate, in 1942, so we can talk it over in detail then! /Looking forward to it, Harry./

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Now, one or two examples of The Things They Do . . .

PROBER: "...It gets very exciting after a time, tracking down the elements of the future in one's dreams. I keep a Printator and pencil by my bedside every night, and start up at odd moments to record the fleeting elements of dreams. My wife curses like anyfink, cos I keep on waking her up. I tell her she has only got to put up with it for a dozen years or so, in the interests of science, but she doesn't appear really enthusiastic." (HSWC)

CIVIL SERVANT: "Several of us from the office decided to have a "night out" last week, and we made an excursion to one of the swimming ponds. After the swim we played leap-frog and other such pastimes in the Meadows, which is, as you know, one of Edinburgh's many open spaces - and wide too." (TSB) /Leap-frog .....

TRAVELLING SALESMAN AND AUTHOR: "For about fifteen years I've visited this fair Isle /of Man/ four, five and sometimes six times per year. It is my haven of rest. It produces fair women, good beer, and knows nothing of science-fiction. Leastways, I've never been able to discover a Marx fan. Some fine day, I'm going to turn out a Fortean article on this place. They've got a breed of tailless poultry as well as tailless cats, and once had some tailless cattle - but nobody was interested in preserving them for posterity. Fuchsia here grows to tree height, and I've seen samples you could climb. In England, it's a bush. A cutting from said bush becomes a tree in the Isle of Man, and a cutting from the tree reverts to a bush back in England. I could rake you up some more curiosa Manxiana, but matters press." (EFR)

SOCIAL SCIENCE STUDENT: "My work is really tremendously interesting. I have to deal with people who assault their mothers and people who drive their husbands into lunatic asylums and people who live in one room with two other families and people with milk jugs full of pawn tickets - in fact with all sorts of people whose only feature in common is that they want money. It's pretty awful some of it - I don't mean that I don't enjoy it, but there's an awful lot of things wrong with the Great British Empire I took some sweet peas to some of them one day, & they were pathetic - a lot of them never move from their beds or their firesides, & never see flowers or anything but dirt." (SC)

And that is the end of our broadcast in English for tonight. Thank you for your /attention.....DW