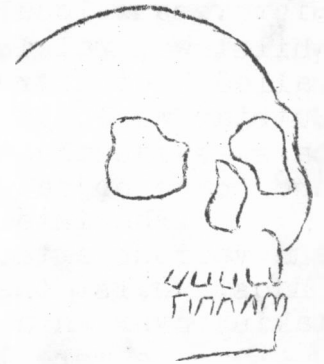


golgotha.

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SCAFELL, GAFIA AND ALL THAT.....

Despite the fact that 1954 saw the reappearance of 'New Worlds' and a letter of comment on BEM from Chuch Harris, the months followed each other in due season. August drew near and the subject of holidays was broached in the White household. I was all for staying at home. BEM 3 was about due and fourteen days without labour would come in handy.....
But Betty had other ideas.

"You sit at home all year," she said, "crouching over a typewriter, smoking innumerable cigarettes and writing Immortal Epics; you need some fresh air. We" she said, "are going to the Lake District---Fell Walking!"

To say that I was horrified is a vast understatement, I was petrified. I was also firm. Too long had I allowed her to interfere with my pursuit of fannish egoboo; I would put my foot down....I would remind her, gently but firmly, that I was the one who had to be honoured and obeyed...in this family I would wear the pants....
"I am not going!" I said,
"Never, never, never!"

* * * *

It was about two o'clock, Saturday August 1st when we arrived in Keswick. By now I had almost completely recovered, apart from one or two faint, yellow bruises under my eyes I was as good as new. After a long search we discovered a petrol-driven vehicle which, the driver laughingly assured us, was the bus to Seatoller, a hamlet at the far end of Borrowdale---in the wilds of which valley we were staying. The driver, a pugnacious individual speaking a



picturesque local patois, stowed our bags at the back of the bus whilst we, walking over a floor evidently composed mainly of hob-nailed boots struggled down the gangway to a pair of empty seats. Outside we could hear the trouble the bus-man was having with our bags--evidently the hens who were the first occupants of the stowage space objected to having to share their room.

The interior of the bus was a fantastic sight. Rucksacks and various articles of clothing hung from the racks in bewildering chaos, whilst the babble of many dialects reminded me of Irishmen taking over an all-night party.

We were lucky enough to have taken the last two vacant seats, but, as the service is anything but regular, this didn't prevent others from getting aboard. By the time we left Keswick there were at least ten standing--three of them on my foot. As we made our way up the valley, we stopped from time to time in order to pick up still more rucksacked individuals who were accommodated by the simple expedient of shoving down the aisle. The sides of the bus bulged dangerously with the supercargo, and the road, which twisted and turned in an alarming manner, didn't help.

We were staying on a farm at the bottom of Honister Pass, within easy reach of many of the best-known peaks, and the warm fire and nicely-furnished room which greeted us upon arrival assured us at least of comfort.

We had been settled in for perhaps an hour when I made the Great Discovery. The maid Shirley, mentioned in conversation that a Mr. Willis was a guest! Hell's Bells! I thought, Ghod in Borrowdale! Travelling incognito and unheralded by a blast of fanzine trumpets. And I had the scoop--I would have the benefit of his scintillating conversation for a whole week! At the end of that time I would no doubt be a demi-ghod myself.

Quickly I dashed upstairs and changed into my best suit. I had a sharp shave, polished my shoes and dashed back to the lounge, where I hastily poised myself on the edge of a chair, holding a notebook and pencil.

Half an hour before tea he came in. I knew it was him intuitively, because he carried a haversack upon which was printed in six-inch letters, 'WILLIS.'

"Hi!" He said, "I'm Willis!"

I was lost in admiration. What wit! What marvellous command of the English language! Here was genius.

He seated himself before the fire and warmed his hands on the fire. "Nasty weather we're having." He said wittily. I scribbled in my notebook before answering. When I looked up he seemed to be slightly uncomfortable. Probably his modesty, I thought, he doesn't like anyone to quote him.

"I know you!" I said. He ran his finger around his collar, as though he was too warm, although it was quite a cold day outside. "Oh, do you?" He asked politely.

"Yes." I assured him, "you see, I'm Tom White."

He mopped his brow with his handkerchief, "that's nice," he said. I laughed uproariously, "Oh---very good." Still, he didn't seem to know who I was, "You know," I continued, "BEM."

"Oh," he said faintly, "BEM -- good!"

"Anyway, I do know you---you're Ghod, aren't you?"

"Am I?"

"Of course you are...you're 'Hyphen's' editor, you live in Belfast."

He seemed to have moved well back in his chair, because it suddenly tipped over backwards, depositing him, in an undignified position, on the floor. His face, now a brilliant red, appeared from behind the chair, "But I don't---I come from Nottingham!"

Nottingham? I thought, but nobody lives in Nottingham.

"But have you come from Belfast lately?" I asked, "does your mother come from Ireland?" He hadn't and she didn't; I was desperate, "Have you any relations in Belfast? Do you suffer from amnesia?" But I was talking to empty air, the door opened and shut so quickly that the hinges burned the wood. I must have made a mistake. Horrible though it may seem there are mundane mortals on this Earth who masquerade under the fair name of the Master.....

"So he's not Ghod." I said sadly to Betty. "Evidently not," she answered, "but never mind, you can have a look round Keswick tomorrow."

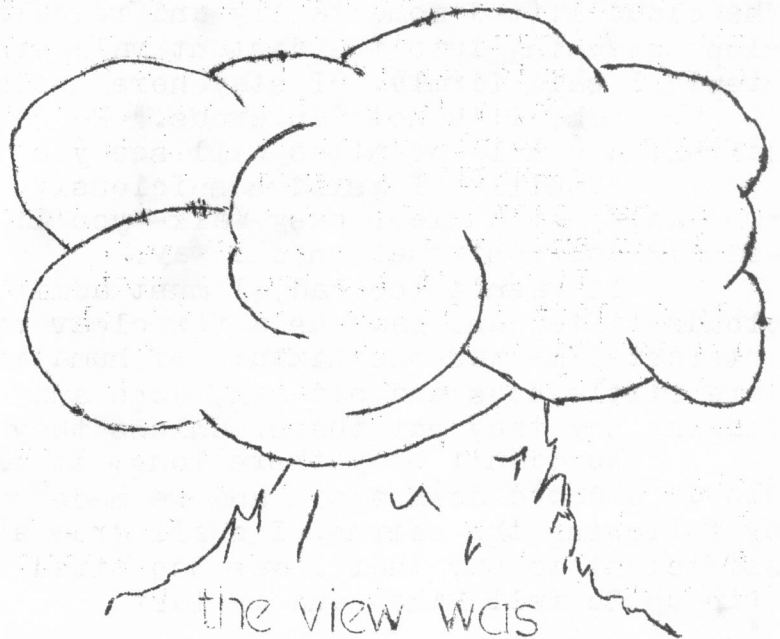
"Ghod," I said, "don't you meet some queer sorts on holiday?"

* * * * *

On Sunday Betty decided that we would climb Scawfell Pike, which is the highest mountain in England....3210 feet! I reminded her that I was not strong; I also reminded her of the promise she made to my mother before we left home. She laid the insurance policies down and looked me straight in the eye, "We go!" she said, We went.

Now it may seem strange to you, but there are people who like to climb mountains---who gladly puff and pant up scree slopes carrying little flags which they stick in the summit! They yodel to each other and gather little flowers and things; they fall out about who got their first and eat Kendal Mint Cake. Of course, I've always said it takes all sorts to make a world.

It was ten O'clock when we started. We were wearing heavy boots which Betty said were necessary for the type of country. Mine were designed to pick up the country and take it with you. They weighed 20 pounds apiece in the raw state. The further you went, the heavier they got. I told Betty I was getting plenty of exercise just wearing them, without moving about. But she's remarkably pig-headed about things like this, she seemed to think it would be a shame to let all these nice mountains go to waste. "Besides," she added, "The



the view was magnificent ...

views are magnificent."

It's a funny thing about climbing, you always seem to be going up hill. It's as if the whole country were a see-saw and, when you have passed, it swings about. You struggle to a place marked on the map as 2000feet ; if you want to get to another spot allegedly 1500feet, then you're entitled to expect a down gradient--but try it! It's up hill all the way---and the ground!

In some places it is mud, in others stones. For variety there are mixtures of the two in varying proportions. The Romans had the good sense to build roads over much of this country; they are still in use, although unfortunately no one has thought to repair them in the meantime.

We left the track at Grain Gill and followed a dotted line on the map which purported to be a path. The chap responsible for this map wasn't a cartographer, he was a practical joker. The 'path' proved to be a black morass, a 50-50 mixture of mud and stone which climbed at an impossible angle up the valley. Even the sheep had webbed-feet. As we made progress through the mess the strap of the knap-sack sank ever deeper through flesh and bone; the sun shone hotly, though we hadn't seen it for at least a week. By the time we reached the top of the Gill I felt as though I'd had twelve hours on the flatbed.

It was about then that I noticed the fog. Details of the landscape became first uncertain and then disappeared altogether. It wasn't thick, we could see the next cairn on the path, and Betty trustingly followed these. It didn't hide the occasional heap of bones, either, I'm not sure what they were, but they didn't sooth my feelings at all; in fact it was about then that we had an argument, Betty saying that it wasn't necessary to crawl on all fours.

When we reached the shelter at Esk Haus, we had a few words with a chap resting there. He pointed out that the 'fog' was in actual fact cloud. I began to feel like Hilary; I straightened my shoulders and calling Betty, strode forward into the cloud. Our unknown friend called out, "Just a second," he said, "you're going the wrong way." The cloud lifted momentarily and revealed a steep, stone covered slope sweeping into the distant valley. I sat down. "Not one more step!" I said firmly. "I stay here until it lifts."

"Oh, it's not dangerous." He said cheerfully, "just follow the cairns, a couple of miles will see you there."

"Uphill?" I asked suspiciously.

"Oh, no, just a nice, easy walk--you'll do it in no time." We thanked him and continued on our way.

It wasn't too bad, I must admit, and we were lucky, the clouds lifted and gave us a few clear moments at the top. But what interested me was the mixture of humanity we found up there. There were little boys and old men, dogs and elderly ladies. I can't imagine how they got there. Unless they lived there.

We didn't stay there long; it was difficult to breathe. The clouds clamped down again and we made our way back to the farm by following the cairns. I shall draw a veil over that journey, sufficient to say that I was too tired to eat----it was my first trip up Scafell Pike--and my last.

***** THE END *****

Extract from 'Swill', published by Gerry Reeman,
who is also responsible for the material.....

* * * * *

QUESTIONS ON LOVE, S-X, MONEY TROUBLES OR LUST*, AUNTY QUARIUM
ANSWERS THEM ALL.

Dear Aunty Q,

For the last few years I have been engaged to a very nice young extraterrestrial from Pluto. Just recently we were married and I discovered that he is bi-sexual. Now the problem that faces me is that although he is very kind and considerate towards me and in every way a model husband, can I trust him alone with himself?

Worried Newlywed.

Dear W.N.

Send me a stamped addressed envelope and I will forward to you an interesting little booklet entitled 'The Sex Life of the Plutonian Thu', published by the Nine Planets Marriage Guidance Council.

Dear Aunty Q,

Recently I have been associating with a young spaceman who unfortunately contracted Venusian Swamprot on his last voyage. As a result of this liason I now find that I am stagnant. What shall I do?

Perplexed Poppy.

Dear P.P.

Drop Dead.

Dear Aunty Q,

My Vampire fiance has recently left me in a state of extreme anaemia for another. I still love him. How can I win him back with out resultant loss of face?

Corpuscleless Connie.

Dear C.C.

Try a course of Dr. Fhu Fhu's Black Pills for Bloodless Females. These should do the trick.

* Chuch Harris---please note.

WHY DID WILLIS MAKE LITTLE APPLES?

I have before me a copy of a publication entitled 'GAIANTY' purporting to be the OMPazine of Derek Pickles. The person who published this sheet is definitely NOT Derek Pickles---I don't know Derek Pickles. The author mentions that I was known to him during the early days of the Bradford Club; well, I did meet a person who introduced himself as Derek, but it turned out to be Claude Degler. Who this chap is I don't know. Incidentally, if you are interested in the present whereabouts of Degler--look no further! He's still here in Bradford, working for Dell's, the bookseller. What happened to Derek I don't know; I believe that he buried him in the cellar under a stack of rejected Willis Mss for Phantas.....

THIS IS A STORY THAT BEM DARE NOT PRINT; IT WAS A CLOSE FIGHT
BETWEEN ME AND THE NEWS OF THE WORLD.....

A PLOT REVEALED.

by

NORMAN G. WANSBOROUGH.

I was reading a copy of 'Planet' which I bought at the con when there came a rat-tat-tat on the door of my humble abode. Going to the door I opened it and stood agast at the Thing on the Doorstep, which had once been a fan, for I recognised Balt Chillis. He was covered in blood from head to foot, was desperately trying to stand up straight, but couldn't seem to make it. Under his arm was a blood-stained Wire Recorder.

"What on Earth has happened to you, Balt?" I asked. I helped him in and then he asked me to listen to his wire recorder as it would explain all. The Wire Recorder started up and a voice who I recognised as Dinø Varke spoke, "I don't agree with it--it's dishonest."

"It's all right for you to talk of honesty Dinø, they're already paying your fare, we have to raise ours and I think this is a good way to do it."

"Well, I still don't like it Tedus." said Dinø.

At that point I had to change a reel, and Balt told me it was Tedus Bub, a well-known member of the Met Circle who lived in London. New reel was started off. "Well, I think it's a good idea Tedus," came the voice of Cluck Charis. "I do too, Tedus." I recognised the voice of Bal Dashworth of Bradford.

"Well, it's two to one then." Came the voice of Tedus Bub. By the time the Mancon programme has been out for a week or so, we'll be able to charge enough for 'Franvana' to get to the 'Frisco Con next September. We-----"

At that point the whole wire recorder lunched and fell to the floor. Apparently Balt had been attacked by Dinø Varke and the others to stop him exposing this vile plot to the rest of fandom. So if you see the first four pages of a fanzine in the souvenir programme of the Mancon, and there is a notice saying contributions and subscriptions are by invitation only, take no notice, remember

YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!

-o-