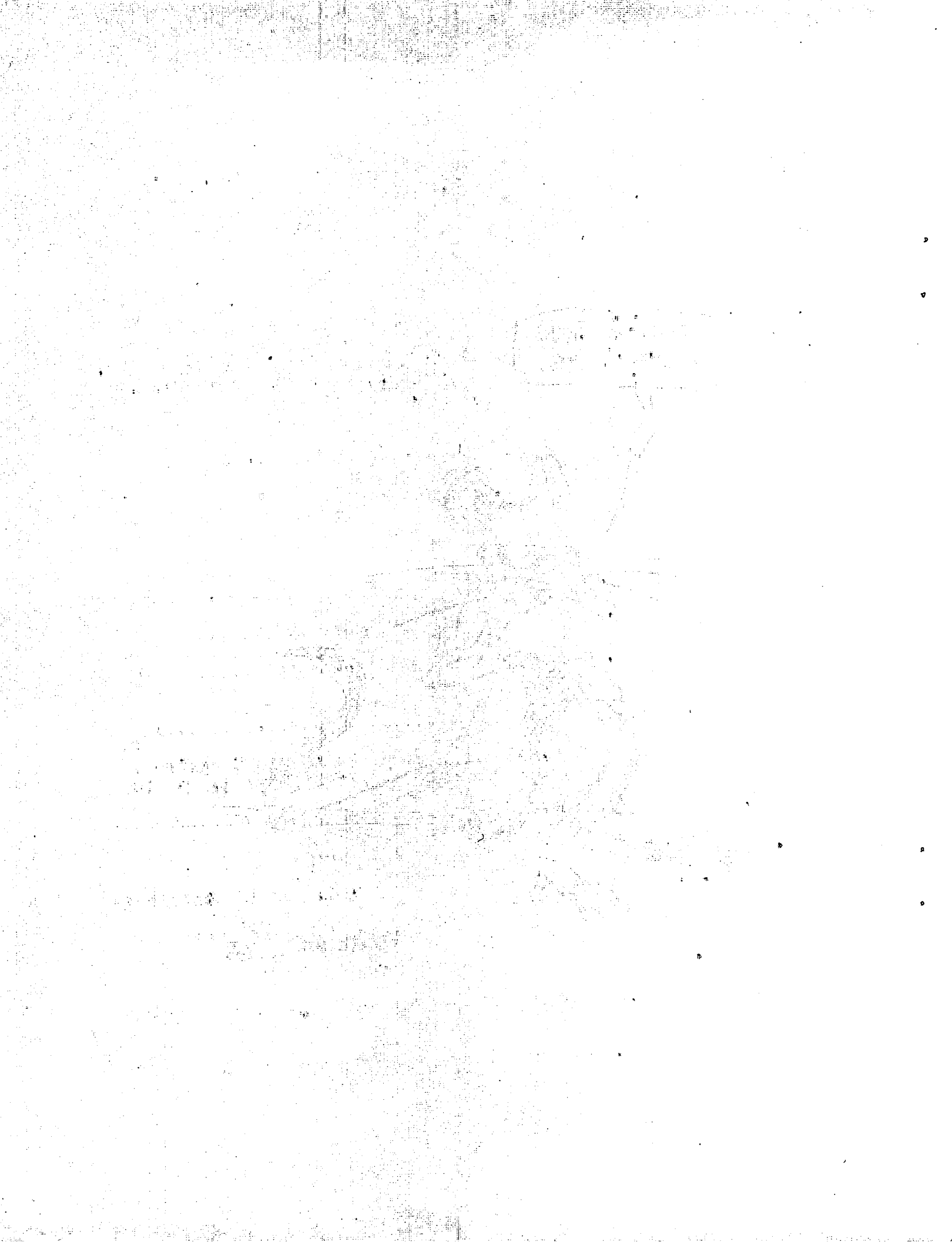


NO 7

RUTH BILMAN
COVETS RATS.



FLETCHER '68



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Huckster Dept: Back-issues of No cost 50¢ each (#s 1, 4, 6 available). Copies of The Road to Fame by D.R. Smith (a multi-barrelled parody of Professor Challenger, Tarzan, DuQuesne, etc.) are available for 50¢ each, and A Sherlockian Christmas Carroll (an ancient double-barrelled parody of SH and Alice) by Ron Whyte and me for 25¢/copy.

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The Jan. 30 Saturday Review has a poem of mine on p. 21.

What I've Been Doing

This year I've been assigned as TA to a year-long course, History of the Novel. It is aimed at lower classmen, and they seem to lack pomposity. They don't come up with much in the way of bloopers. However, a few spectacular ones appeared (mostly in the final exam, when pressure and lack of time combine to create much pomp and snow-teacher-attempts):

Granted, Sterne does focus in on the spicy, if sometimes tasteless details of life.

They cared only for depicting things as they were -- not covered up by a brown burlap wall that the so-called "genteel" society wallowed in.

She really doesn't understand what's behind the cliques of the 18th century.

He teaches that evil ways (Roxana's) are unrewarding, and that Virtue is to be priced above all else.

A striking example of Tom's spontaneity is that he never goes to bed with a woman unless she makes the first advances.

During Christmas vacation (after recovering from grading the finals) I went to New York, ostensibly to attend the Modern Language Association Convention. The MLA convention is the main interview-spot for would-be college teachers of modern languages who are out job-hunting. I wasn't after a job this year, but wanted to get an idea of what it was like so as to be more at ease next year or the year after, when I will be. I spent some time walking around the con talking to people (chiefly Nan Braude), but only went to hear one paper, on an early melodrama of W.S. Gilbert's (as a fore-runner of the "Problem Plays" of Pinero and others in the 90's -- from the description, I gather that it doesn't give much promise of Gilbert's real gifts). The paper was by J.O. Bailey, who wrote Pilgrims Through Time and Space, the first history of sf.

Mainly, though, I went to New York to visit Devra Langsam and see plays on Broadway. We saw one magnificent production, Home, by David Storey, with Sir Ralph Richardson and Sir John Gielgud. They could probably spend an evening on stage staring at their shoes and still hold an audience (in fact, the play opens with Gielgud doing more or less that -- and it's beautiful).

Given good material, as they are in Home, they are enthralling.

(Shortly before the vacation I saw them both on The David Frost Show, where they managed to be enchanting even without a set script to work from, creating a neatly balanced comedy from their own contrasting manners. Gielgud, at first, dominated the conversation, answering Frost's questions with ease and grace, while Richardson sat silent. Slowly Richardson seemed to grow at ease, talking more and throwing in small jokes -- including in a discussion of the earliest roles they'd played, one-line young pages, one-line aged butlers, etc., a parody of a young man's way of playing an old man and adding with a straight face, "It's very easy to play an old man." Richardson laughed at his own jokes in a way I've never before encountered outside the pages of English novels, stopping in the middle of a sentence to exclaim, "Haw!" and then going right on. By the end of the show, Richardson was obviously having a fine time undercutting Frost's questions. He would, for example, let Gielgud go first to answer a question like "Did your life change when you were knighted?" Gielgud said no, not particularly. Richardson then gave his answer, "Yes. Afterwards, my wife and I went out to a restaurant, and we ordered oysters. I found a pearl in my oyster. That -- haw! -- never happened to me before I was knighted." At the end of the show, Frost asked the two



men if they would each recite something. Gielgud dutifully and beautifully recited a Shakespearean sonnet, "When to the sessions of sweet silent thought." Richardson then pulled out a sheet of paper, explaining that they'd been told beforehand that Frost would make such a request, and that he, unlike John, didn't know much poetry by heart, so he had brought something to read by John Keats. It turned out to be "Dawlish Fair," an amusing, bawdy, and quite unromantic bit of light verse.)

We also saw a Neil Simon musical, Promises Promises, a precision-made, but hollow comedy, and the new Richard Rogers musical, Two by Two, which is largely a failure (confused wavering between support of Ham-who-represents-the-current-younger-generation and between putting him down; lack of motivation for the younger sons' choices of mates; stereotyped portrayal of Shem and his wife as pushy, money-grubbing, albeit basically good-hearted Jews; music not all that good; etc.). However, there are some excellent things in it -- especially the opening sequence, a dialog between Noah (Danny Kaye) and God (thunder and a slide show of paintings representing the subjects of God's remarks). Besides, Danny Kaye is irresistible.

The drawing of me on the front of this page is about ten years old. Bob did it during the Pitcon (I think). I don't have a current address for him, and would be grateful if someone out there knows it and would let me know where to send Bob a copy.

Enclosed with this issue are Hugo ballots and Focal Point poll ballots. In the interests of equal time, I'll mention that fandom's other chief newszine, Locus (subscriptions from Charlie & Dena Brown, 2078 Anthony Avenue Bronx NY 10457, are 10/\$2 and never mind the complications of non-North American subscriptions, long-term subscriptions, etc) is also running a poll. The Locus poll is a survey of readers, as well as a poll of fannish achievement, so it wouldn't make sense for another fanzine editor to send it out. Both FP and L are good newszines (FP is more like a genzine, with columns by Terry Carr and others; L has more straight news).

The Irregular Reviewer
Dean W. Dickensheet, I.S.:B.S.I.

"THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES". A United Artists release, produced and directed by Billy Wilder; screenplay by Wilder and I.A.L. Diamond. Rated GP.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle actually considered the Sherlock Holmes adventures to be boys' stories, a fact evinced both by his introduction to The Casebook and by his suppression of "The Adventure of the Cardboard Box" for 23 years because it involved marital infidelity. Sir Arthur would not be happy with Mr. Wilder's film; nor will a number of persons who see Holmes as a Victorian Tom Mix, a mixture of virtue and papier mâché. Lamentably, this group includes many of the Eastern reviewers.

Dedicated Baker Street Irregulars, however (despite the insinuations of the aforementioned reviewers), do not see Holmes and Watson as stainless demi-gods, but as flesh-and-blood Englishmen whose actions and personalities may be extrapolated far beyond the bounds of the Canon. They, therefore, may disagree with Wilder's and Diamond's interpretations, but not with their right to make them. Far more scandalous positings have appeared in the pages of Sherlockian Journals.

So, then, to the film. Less an attempt to retell or expand the Sherlockian Canon than one to provide a neglected set of illustrations, it is a most engaging film, when it is not forced. The Victorian Baker Street contrived by Art Director Tony Inglis and Set Decorator Harry Cordwell is magnificently right, even when one remembers that it was never that narrow nor that clean; Christopher Challis' photography enhances the illusion artfully. The acting is consistently excellent, even when it fails to surmount the direction -- Irene Handl would have made a marvelous Mrs. Hudson, had she not been reduced to a meddling busybody; Molly Maureen is, despite some overly-ingenuous lines, the best Queen Victoria this reviewer has seen (Sorry, Miss Hayes!). It is when the film attempts hard satire or hard plot that it fails. And, of course, the notorious Wilder-Diamond "humor," derived directly from Captain Billy's Whiz-Bang, makes a few gristly appearances (there is, however, one pure sight-gag, directed entirely at the viewer, which is a 20-second masterpiece).

The plot is an episodic one, the first part discrete (if its subject matter will allow that term) and the last two interconnected. (There is evidence that there were at least two other episodes in the original script, and that Wilder perhaps left the equivalent of another entire film on the cutting-room floor.) The first incident involves the offer, by

a Russian ballerina (Tamara Toumanova), of a Stradivari violin in return for Holmes' (Robert Stephens) siring her child. Out of his element, and lacking the ready wit in the circumstances shown by George Bernard Shaw¹, Holmes provides a defense which proves most embarrassing to the womanizing Dr. Watson (Colin Blakely).

The principal portion of the plot belies the earlier segment by at least implying that Holmes can use sex as an appurtenance to detection, and perhaps even enjoy it. An amnesiac foreign woman (Genevieve Page) is pulled from the Thames and is found to be clutching a card bearing Holmes' address. She is brought to Baker Street by a cabman, given a sleeping draught by Dr. Watson, and put to bed. Later, Holmes parlays her bout of semi-somnambulism (some male Sherlockians wish that Wilder had gone for an "R" rating rather than so heavily crop Miss Page's nude scene) into a solution of her amnesia. Engaged by her to find her husband, a Belgian marine engineer, Holmes and Watson encounter Mrs. Wilson, a not-too-notorious canary-trainer, a thin Mycroft Holmes (Christopher Lee², in a Diogenes Club only slightly larger and more opulent than White's or Brooks's), monks, midgots, grave-diggers (including a wasting of Stanley Holloway), The Society for the Preservation of Scottish Monuments, naval architects, Her Majesty the Queen Empress, and -- well, what would you expect to encounter in Loch Ness?

1. Shaw was once (so it is said) approached by an actress with a similar request. "How the world would profit," she said, "from a child with my body and your brain." "But, my dear woman," Shaw replied, "what if the wretched creature has my body and your brain?"

2. Lee has previously played both Sherlock Holmes and Sir Henry Baskerville; he need play only Dr. Watson and Mrs. Hudson to complete an honours trick.



Scarcely The Hound of the Baskervilles, but still very far from Sherlock Holmes in Washington.

There are flaws of research a-plenty for Irregulars, of course: various references date the occurrences as 1886, 1891, and after 1902; Swan-Lake was never danced in London during the Victorian reign; Holmes already had a Stradivarius.... But all this is totally irrelevant quibble.

The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes is, in sum, imperfect, but fascinating, arguable but endearing, and unequivocally well-made (to quote Holmes regarding the King of Bohemia's equipage: "There is money in this, Watson, if there is nothing else"). Everyone who can believe in the fallible humanity of Sherlock Holmes should see the film; Sherlockians should see it twice, once to assimilate and dispense with the plot and once purely to bask in the aura of Baker Street.

Morris's "Atalanta's Race" and Dowden's "Atalanta":
a study of Victorian sexual politics
by Sandra Sandell

Readers of Victorian poetry quite possibly made their acquaintance with the Atalanta myth in Atalanta in Calydon, Swinburne's poem of 1865. But, according to Douglas Bush (Mythology and the Romantic Tradition), Swinburne's work was only one of at least six poems about Atalanta which appeared between 1863 and 1887. The last of these poems, Sir Edwin Arnold's "Atalanta," was the first selection in the first issue of a girls' cultural magazine of the same name. William Morris's "Atalanta's Race" appeared in 1868, Edward Dowden's "Atalanta" in 1876, Walter Savage Landor's "Hippomenes and Atalanta" in 1863, and John Brent's "Atalanta" in 1873.

Why was the myth so popular at this time? Obviously, it does not deal with the perennial problems of man's relation with God or the Cosmos. It does, however, deal with man's relation to woman -- and that was an important issue during this period. A reading of two poems published within a decade of each other -- Morris's "Atalanta's Race" and Dowden's "Atalanta" -- shows how the bare myth has been sent into the world dressed up in details which exhibit the two poets' quite different attitudes toward woman and man's relationship to her in the institution of marriage.

Atalanta, like other mythological characters, has a rather confused biography. (The following account of the details of Atalanta's life was compiled from the following classical and modern sources: Apollodorus, The Library, translated by Sir James G. Frazer; Ovid, The Metamorphoses, translated by Horace Gregory; J. Lampriere's Bibliotheca Classica, or A Classical Dictionary, 1801; Robert Graves, The Greek Myths, 1955.) Some mythographers claim her father was Schoenous; others that he was Iasus. Some claim her husband was Hippomenes; others that he was Melanion or Milanion. But most of these details are irrelevant to this discussion. The events of her life are what matter, but they, too, are disputed. However, most sources agree that, because her father desired only male issue, he had her left to die in the wilderness. A bear (an animal sacred to Artemis) suckled her and kept her from starving. Having been raised by hunters, Atalanta became a huntress and a servant of Artemis. Always armed and always alone, Atalanta roamed the woods in search of game.

Atalanta's exploits were unusual for a woman. She was the only woman to join Jason on the expedition of the Argo; and she was the only woman in the party which hunted the boar of Calydon. Her presence there caused a certain amount of furor. Shortly after the beginning of the hunt, she was compelled to shoot two centaurs when they attempted to rape her. For being the first to wound the fierce boar, and perhaps because Meleager was enamoured of her, he awarded her the boar's hide although she certainly did not drive home the fatal blow. (Although she still continued to pose as a virgin, she may have had an illegitimate son by Meleager.) At some time, she also won a wrestling match with Peleus.

But perhaps the most important event in the myth of Atalanta -- and one that figures significantly in both the Dowden and Morris poems -- is her race with those who wished to wed her. After she grew up, she was recognized by and reconciled with her father, who commanded her to marry. She agreed to his wish but only on the condition that she marry only a man who could outrun her in a footrace. Should any suitor fail, he would suffer death -- some authorities say by her own hand. Although several men failed to win, finally Milanion, with the help of Aphrodite, won the race and thereby Atalanta herself.

Whatever one might think of Atalanta's method of testing her suitors, one thing is certain. She was an independent, competent, courageous woman, one who was an equal with man in most fields of endeavor usually considered -- then and now -- the exclusive domain of the male.

refused to submit and become like the patient Victorian wife who doted on her husband and lived only to comfort and entertain him. She was willing to enter a partnership of free and equal beings.

Atalanta is what Ibsen's Nora Helmer must become. In a discussion of A Doll's House (in Edmund Gosse's Henrik Ibsen, The Works of Henrik Ibsen, 1912) Dowden writes,

The truth of married life can be found only when the woman is seen not as an adjunct or appendage formed for the ease or pleasure of her husband, but as herself a complete individual, who has entered into an alliance of mutual help. The charming Nora is a sweet little song bird, a little lark, a pretty squirrel -- anything graceful and petted, but not a reasonable and responsible woman.... Her whole married life has been a lie; now suddenly the truth breaks in upon her...she must understand and in some measure realize herself before she can render any true service to others.

Surely Dowden sees that the adventurous Atalanta has realized herself before she marries and can therefore consent to the union out of a feeling of strength and maturity. Though she still has an occasional touch of doubt about her marriage, she is aware of how precious her husband and child are to her.

Perhaps Dowden chose Atalanta as the mythological character on which to pin these ideas because he sees her resemblance to Spenser's Belphoebe (discussed in Dowden's "Heroines of Spenser," Transcripts and Studies, 1888):

Belphoebe's passion is that of virginal joy and pride and freedom. She thinks of love for no man and from none, whether to give or to take.... Not love but honour is her aim, and this she seeks where true honour may be found, amid the toils and dangers of a strenuous life.

Belphoebe's condition is that of the maiden Atalanta, but even after her marriage, Atalanta can pay homage to her goddess Artemis. Her love has been hallowed by marriage and therefore she is still chaste and moreover she is still a free and proud person.

Some of Dowden's other prose writings illustrate his interest in and respect and sympathy for intelligent, independent women. He is extremely perturbed with Swinburne (in a letter to Edmund Gosse, Oct. 15, 1879), who "described Mrs Lowes as an Amazon thrown over the head of her spavined and surgalled

Pegasus." He was interested enough in the girls' magazine Atalanta to contribute an essay on Byron and one on Matthew Arnold of which he says, "I never wrote anything with greater care" (in a letter to Clement Shorter, Oct. 3, 1890). His treatment of Mary Godwin (Shelley) in his The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley (1886) is sympathetic and candid. And finally Dowden appears to be whole heartedly in favor of Walt Whitman's attitude toward the body, sexuality, and the "young American woman who works for herself and others, who dashes out more and more into real hardy life, who holds her own with unvarying coolness and decorum, who will compare any day, with superior carpenters, farmers, and 'even boatmen and drivers'" ("The Poetry of Democracy: Walt Whitman" in Dowden's Studies in Literature, 1789-1877). This donnish gentleman shows a remarkable and consistent respect for the "new woman" -- the same respect he shows for his Atalanta. Dowden's ideal woman is equally developed in mind and body. Neither frivolous nor pampered, capable of a mature love, she is the respected equal of man.

How curious that such a different attitude is found in the writings of the famous aesthetic and social reformer, William Morris, whom one might quite reasonably expect to be somewhat of a radical feminist. Oddly enough, the subject of woman is conspicuously absent from the indices of works on Morris.

((editorial intrusion: Cf. Dorothy Sayers' Caudy Night:

"Ah, yes," said Peter, in his reediest wood-wind voice:
"And these say: 'No more now my knight
Or God's knight any longer' -- you,
Being than they so much more white,
So much more pure and good and true,
Will cling to me for ever --"

William Morris had his moments of being a hundred-percent manly man."

"Poor Morris!" said the Dean.

"He was young at the time," said Peter indulgently.
"It's odd, when you come to think of it, that the expressions 'manly' and 'womanly' should be almost more offensive than their opposites. One is tempted to believe that there may be something indelicate about sex after all.")

Of course, Morris could hardly avoid the subject completely. In Notes from Nowhere, the narrator and the old man who explains the functioning of the utopian society of the twenty-first century discuss women and marriage. The old man says that "women do what they can do best, and what they like best, and the men are neither jealous of it or injured by it." But guess what the women are doing? Even the narrator asks if it isn't somewhat reactionary for the women to be waiting on the men, but the wise old man sets him straight: "Don't you know, that it is a great pleasure to a clever woman to manage a house skillfully, and to do it so that all the house mates about her look pleased and are grateful to her?" Morris, it would seem, is inveighing against the life style of the wealthy Victorian woman of leisure whose servants performed all domestic duties; but he is also praising the woman who to some extent sacrifices herself for others. He also points out how all women in this utopia look forward to maternity now that they no longer need worry about the bearing and rearing of their children in a happier, healthier society.

In the future utopia, women have been liberated in other ways. Since woman is no longer economically dependent on a man, he is no longer legally compelled to provide for her. Marriage is no longer a business or legal arrangement but "a contract of passion or sentiment," and it is terminable by either partner. Notice that Morris seems quite concerned about love (marriage is a union of affection, not one of help or support) and about liberating woman's sexuality from the restrictions of law or custom. No more are women considered ruined "for following their natural desires in an illegal way, which of course was a convention caused by the laws of private property". Of all utopians, Morris alone seems concerned about female beauty. All the women in his paradise are "at least comely," and the old man considers it a "touching sight to see some beautiful girl, daintily clad and crowned with flowers" dancing in a May Day celebration. Morris has "liberated" women, but mainly in those qualities that men find attractive. In short, there is perhaps only one way that Morris's future woman differs from the average Victorian wife, whose sole excuse for being, says Walter Houghton (The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870; 1957), "was to love, honor, obey -- and amuse -- her lord and master, and to manage his household and bring up his children": Morris's utopian woman does not have to obey.



Some of Morris's conceptions of the ideal woman (especially some of the more obnoxious ideas) as well as the Victorian anxiety about sexuality underlie Morris's conception of Atalanta. Like the woman of utopia, Morris's Atalanta is beautiful and charming. Although she is a fleet-footed runner, an athlete, Morris describes her as "delicate and white." Even after she has beaten a hopeful suitor in a race, she does not sweat or pant: she breathes "like a little child." Morris describes his Atalanta as an ethereal goddess, "no sharer in the world's mortality." Moreover, she is cruel. Although Dowden does not mention her cruelty, Morris emphasizes it. One of the citizens who tells Milanion of Atalanta's background says that after she was exposed "some cruel God thought good/ To save her beauty in the world's despite"; still another citizen says that the city's name is "accurst...for its cruelty." Morris's Atalanta is as dangerous as Helen, for she is

Too fair for one to look on and be glad [to one]
Who scarcely yet has thirty summers had,
If he must still behold her from afar;
Too fair to let the world live free from war.

Morris's Atalanta clearly epitomizes the femme fatale, the beautiful, destructive, even deadly woman.

Nevertheless, her deadly qualities do not allay Milanion's lust even though he has been warned that

she the saffron gown will never wear,
And on no flower strewn couch shall she be laid,
Nor shall her voice make glad a lover's ear.

It appears that Milanion's prime concern in this poem is to get his deadly woman on that flowery couch. When he goes to the temple of Aphrodite to pray her to help him win the race, he explains that he, unlike her previous suitors, does not want her because of her father's kingdom. He wants a "heaven of bliss," a euphemism Aphrodite understands, for she tells Milanion not to forget her when Atalanta "Diana's raiment must unbind/... and [he be] with eager arms about her twined." To help him win the lady, the goddess gives him the golden apples.

Aphrodite's apples do their work, and Atalanta succumbs to the desire for pleasure. Her behavior during and after the race is quite different from that of Dowden's heroine. Even before the race, the sight of Milanion's face makes her ashamed of her maiden's garments. When Milanion throws the first apple, unlike Dowden's Atalanta who was attracted at least partly by its beauty, Morris's childlike Atalanta desires "to have the toy."

But the apple is more than a bauble; it is also a gift "to make of earth a heaven" -- apparently that same "heaven of bliss" Milanion desires. In fact, Morris's telling of the story makes all Atalanta's obstinate clinging to her maidenhood appear to be a fraudulent posturing. After winning the race, Milanion takes her in his arms and kisses her. Immediately she is

so wrapped in new unbroken bliss [that]
Made happy that the foe the prize hath won,
She weeps glad tears for all her glory gone.

She feels none of the shame of being defeated and none of the regret at abandoning her virgin status which Dowden's woman felt. Morris's heroine gladly offers to Aphrodite "her maiden zone, her arrows, and her bow," and, in so doing, she surrenders both her virginity and her freedom.

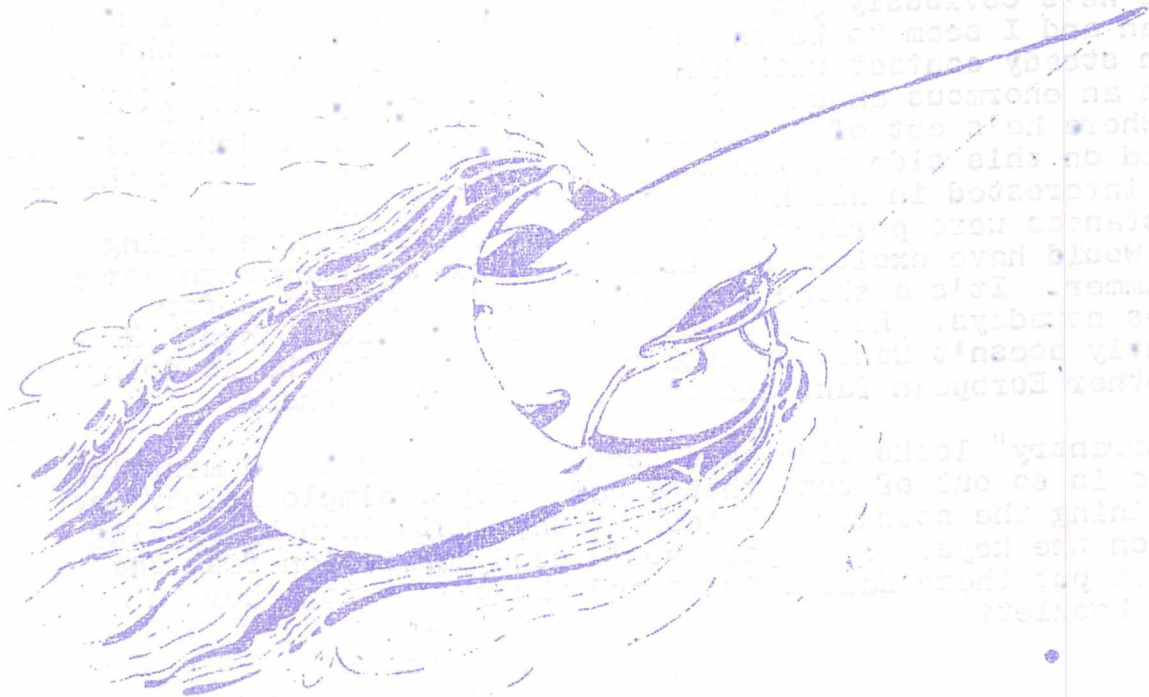
Although sexual desire is one of the reasons Dowden's Atalanta loses the race, it seems to be the sole incentive of both the hero and heroine of Morris's poem. In spite of its euphemistic language and vague Medieval opulence, Morris's "Atalanta's Race" is not an innocent work. Beneath it is an undercurrent of prurience -- it is a dirty wedding night story disguised as a romance. Indeed, it bears more than a slight resemblance to The Lustful Turk, a classic piece of Victorian pornography of which Stephen Marcus writes (in The Other Victorians: a Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth Century England; 1964):

The chief sexual fantasies represented in The Lustful Turk can be rather simply outlined. They have largely to do with the sexuality of domination, with that conception of male sexuality in which the aggressive and sadistic components almost exclusively prevail. Each of the separate stories...begins with a virgin, reluctant, proud, chaste, a young woman in whom Nature has not yet been awakened. She then undergoes a series of violent experiences, which ritually include beating, flogging, and defloration in the form of rape. By means of these sufferings, her pride is subdued, her chastity broken, and in their place Nature -- responsiveness -- is substituted.

(If the reader is grieved that I have lumped Morris with the author of The Lustful Turk, perhaps I can assuage his pain by saying that Marcus says that Byron, Keats, even Wordsworth, have affinities with this pornographer.) Of course, imaginative as he was, William Morris was not the Marquis De Sade, and so his

poem contains none of this overt brutality. Yet it must be admitted that Atalanta is subdued when she is "beaten" in the race by the lustful Milanion and that she immediately responds.

Morris's Atalanta is so different from Dowden's that it is difficult to realize that they were using the same myth. Yet neither poet does more violence to the myth than does the other. The psychology of Dowden's character seems more true to the myth as a whole; yet he underplays the violence in her character. Morris's use of the medieval conventions helps make his heroine like the aloof medieval lady of the courtly love tradition, not like a high-spirited female; and in his depiction of her rapid "fall," he is merely following clues in Ovid. Nonetheless, it seems that both poets (Dowden, I suspect, consciously; Morris perhaps unconsciously) have fleshed out the classic skeleton to suit their version of the ideal woman. The two poems are interesting and contrasting versions of Victorian sexual politics; Dowden is a democrat, and Morris, in keeping with his interest in things Medieval, is an aristocrat.



NO & YES
Letters

HARRY WARNER: John Boardman's article in this new No tells me some things about a topic which I knew almost nothing about, the Illuminati. Masonry, on the other hand, is a trifle more familiar. I wonder if John is right, when he describes Masons as typically "upper and middle class men who run to businessmen and generals." Maybe Hagerstown is a special case, but I don't think of local Masons as often coming from anything other than the middle class; the upper class around here seems reluctant to join anything except the Rotary club, Chamber of Commerce, and the right country club. I've never observed locally the prejudice against Masonry that seems to persist in some areas. The Catholic population is quite small here, which might be part of the explanation, and the Masonic Temple has always been a favorite place for all sorts of other organizations to stage big dinners and large meetings, another factor that must have kept the bulk of the populace from thinking of the lodge as something unapproachable.

The Big Heart award went to Herbert Häussler, not Bill Huesler. I suppose I should write an article about him some day, because he's obviously just a name to almost everyone in fandom. Ackerman and I seem to be the only English-speaking fans who have been in steady contact with him in recent years. He has been through an enormous amount of personal tragedy, he lives in a place where he's cut off from almost every form of science fiction produced on this side of the Iron Curtain, and yet he's as cheerful and as interested in his hobby as if his life and present circumstances were perfect. I doubt if a visit from a flying saucer would have excited him as much as his meeting with Forry this summer. It's a shame that Ackerman doesn't write for fanzines nowadays. He could tell some remarkable things. He apparently doesn't want any publicity on something he is doing for another European fan, and this is a terrible shame.

"Errantry" looks fine, and sounds well when heard mentally. My piano is so out of tune that I can enjoy a simple melody better by imagining the sounds as I look at the music than by picking it out on the keys. I suppose you'd need permission from the author to put these Baines tunes and the poetry together in a special booklet?

MIKE WOOD: Saw a fantastic episode of The Name of the Game on NBC-TV last nite (January 15) -- written by Philip Wylie, it was an sf thing set in the year 2071, after ecological disaster. Had quite an impact. I think it's worth considering for the dramatic production Hugo, but it's not eligible until next year's voting -- hope enuf people saw it & remember it.

DON SIMPSON: The Illuminati article should have had a bibliography -- the amount of undocumented gossip about those popular villains of countless fantasies is enormous; and contradiction is rife. (Have you read "The Morning of the Magicians"?) There seem to be a lot of "Illuminati" around, just as there are lots of "Druids," "Rosicrucians," "Gurus" and "Adepts," etc.



