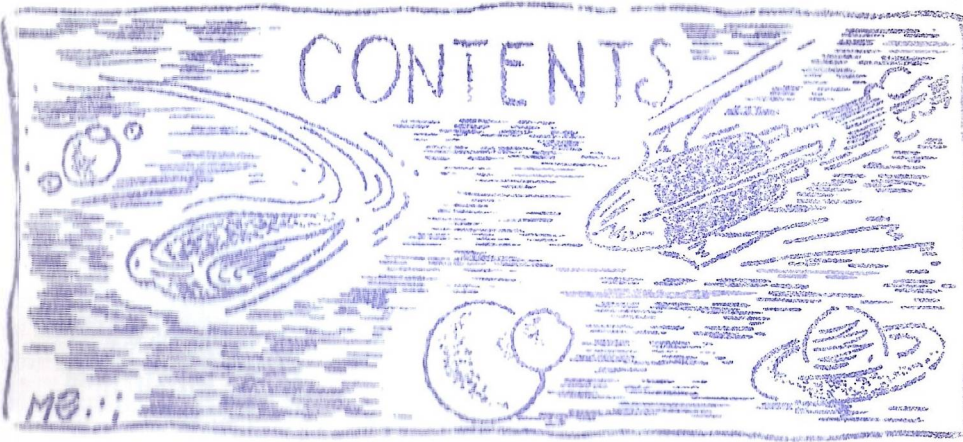


THE
Science Fiction

FAN



ROGERS
1939



OCTOBER 1939

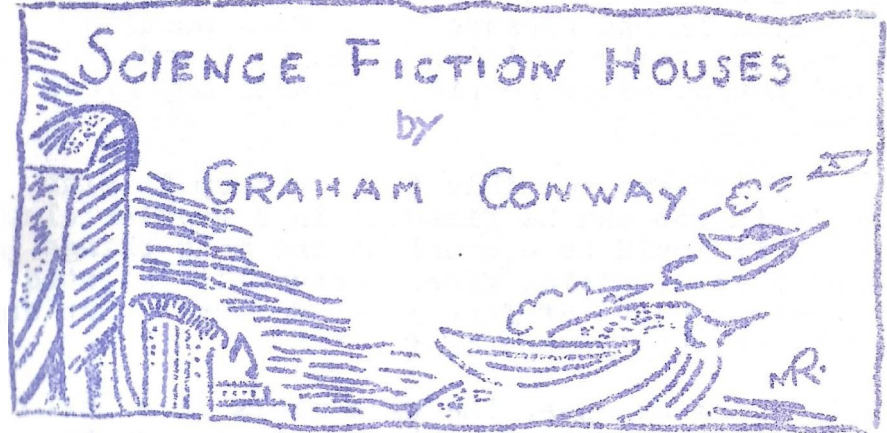
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Olon F. Wiggins. EDITOR
 P.J. Searles ASSOCIATE EDITOR
 Donald A. Wollheim CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
 H.S. Kirby CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
 James M. Rogers ART EDITOR

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Science fiction ^{fans} are scattered all over the country. However here and there are cities where a lot of fans live and form fan clubs. SFL chapters exist in three cities in separate parts of the country where fans are numerous enough to make them big chapters. But most fans live alone in small towns or small cities and are unable to build up big clubs.

Further most fans aren't rich. Because they are young, they haven't got any too much money to spend. Yet they like to travel the same as any other young people. Also they like to correspond and make letter friends in many parts of the country. Naturally they would like to visit these friends and their cities.

Since the summer is the period of vacations, it is not entirely impossible that they could find the time to make visits to other places. One factor usually prevents this. They may have the money to travel but it also costs money to stay. Hotels are expensive and being

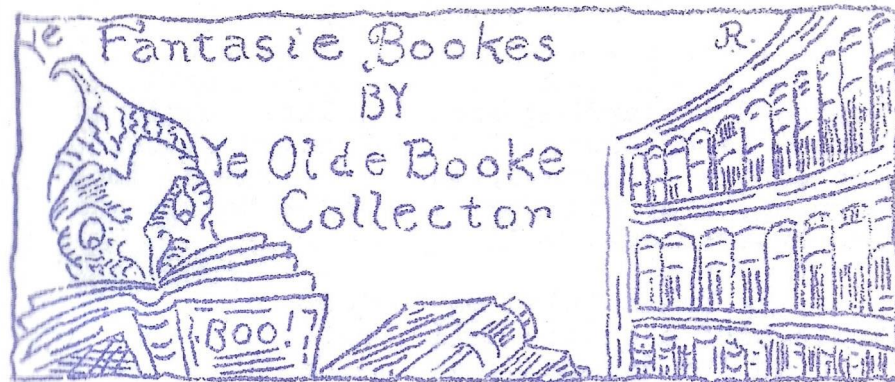
4 FAN
put up at the homes of fans is often uncomfortable or bad because these fans usually live with their families or maybe board and thus cannot offer hospitality with any great ease.

If it were possible to be put up in club rooms (a cot can be fixed up in a regular club room) it would be convenient and make things easier for visiting fans. Naturally isolated or small groups of fans can't do that. But why can't the big groups of fans?

In Los Angeles, the club meets in a restaurant. It would seem to be big enough to meet in its own room. In Philadelphia or in New York the clubs meet in rented or borrowed rooms. These rooms are rented not by the month but for the day. This is no good as it prevents them being used as permanent headquarters. Yet all these clubs claim to be big and claim to be strong.

Perfectly ordinary sports or social clubs have no difficulty in finding places to rent for regular permanent club rooms. Why is it that fans have never been able to do so? Are they any less capable than the non-fans?

When fan clubs of big size exist, they should try to establish a permanent location for their headquarters. A sort of "Science Fiction House" where they can keep regular files, be free from the whims and mercies of parents or landladies, and be able to put up visiting fans with the minimum of trouble. This will help solidify and strengthen the bonds of fandom and fan friendship. Science fiction should have its own permanent centers, maintained by itself and used for itself. The big clubs are the ones that can do this.



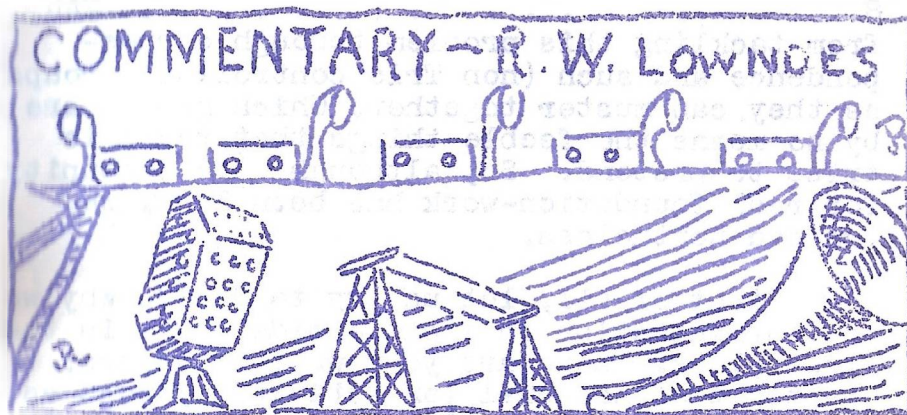
The recent death of Floyd Gibbons coming at the same time as the second World War brings to mind one of Gibbons' earlier works, THE RED NAPOLEON (1929, Jonathon Cape & Harrison Smith). I recall this story very vividly since it was first published in Liberty Magazine copiously illustrated by varied artists, pseudo-war posters, newspaper "clippings", trick photography etc. Floyd Gibbons wrote in a very vivid fast moving style of a Mongolian-Soviet attempt to conquer the world. The general idea is that a Mongol, Ivan Karakhan, had had Stalin assassinated, and then began to alter and shift the Soviet ideology to suit his own ideas of Yellow and Black domination over the white race. It is a neat example of conjuring up the Yellow and Red Perils for dishing out to scare the American people and Gibbons and LIBERTY did it up brown. Anyhow the story begins in 1932, after the world has watched various colonial uprisings in Africa and Asia. It seems that without warning, the Red Armies (combined with the armies of Soviet Japan and China), attacks Poland, Germany and sweeps over

Europe disregarding boundary lines until all Europe is covered. A yellow hoard descends on the cities of Europe, outraging women, looting burning, etc. All the fears of a Hearst mind are trotted out.

After having tied up the old world, and hesitating a little while, Karakhan makes a grab at the Panama Canal, lands troops in Mexico and Canada and starts in on the good ol' U.S.A. Terrific warfare breaks out. But for some reason, the terrific Red-Yellow-Black-European-Asiatic Army fails to make much headway against the United States. True there is invasion of New England and some trouble elsewhere but the land war develops into a stalemate while the center of the conflict turns to the water. It seems that all the Red-Yellow food must come from overseas. Therefore it devolves upon the American fleet to cut Karakhan's food sources and thus defeat him. Accordingly a great battle occurs "The Battle of the Windward Passage" in which the U.S. Navy licks the tar out of the combined British-French-Japanese-German-Italian-Everything else fleets. The back of the invasion broken, Karakhan's world regime falls to pieces immediately and he is interned in Bermuda by the grace and benevolence of the U.S. Government (which has apparently assumed dominance over the rest of the planet.

The book contains maps of the great naval battle, listings of the vessels taking part in the battle (even to names of officers). The war ended in 1937. By 1939, all that stuff should have been done with according to Mr. Gibbons. The actual working out of the second World War seems to have made his prophecies a bit wobbly. Stalin cannot by any stretch of the imagination be the Genghis Khan Karakhan was, and there seems no legitimate reason for America to become involved in this war in any way ever. A curious angle to this yarn was the appearance

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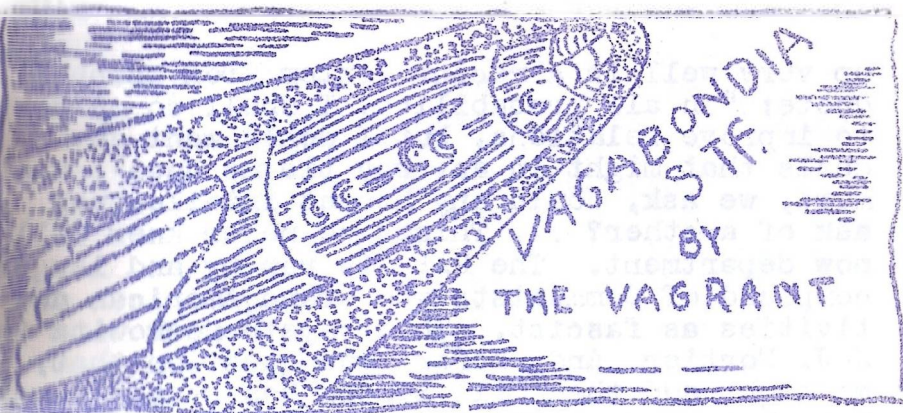
The Philadelphia Conference has come and gone with the basic problem before fandom, that of organization, still unsolved. Not because no fans came prepared to discuss this problem: on the contrary, Milton A. Rothman, Jack Speer, and David A. Kyle had concrete proposals to place before the meeting, but because the Trio, with their muzzled guinea pigs whose business it was to vote "yes" or "no" at the proper time, through the apathy of the chair, bludgeoned their way (via trick parliamentarianism, floods of demagogic oratory, dead cats, red herrings, and practically every propaganda trick known) over everything else and prevented any real discussion of the problem.

However, the Trio cannot prevent the great majority of fans (who will not be deceived by Moskowitz' fascist cry: fans are their own worst enemies; they must be saved from themselves. -- In other words, fans cannot be trusted to think for themselves and may not arrive at their own conclusions or act upon their own decisions in any matter relevant to fandom.)

from tackling this problem through correspondence and such (non Trio controlled) groups as they can muster together. Which groups are by no means the feeble things that the Trio tries to pretend. So, although ~~the~~ opportunity for real foundation-work has been lost, we proceed nonetheless.

First of all, let us try to decide why we need organization on a nationwide scale in the first place. Here are your writer's views; Granted that national fan activities, such as Conferences or Conventions, can only occur once or twice a year, organization is still needed, ot insure that these activities come through in a manner satisfactory to all. (Except perhaps the Trio --any conference or convention that is satisfactory to them will be an insult to the rest of fandom as was their vaunted World Convention and the Philly Conference.) Given fandom unorganized as a whole, as is still the case, some organization is going to occur for the sake of whatever conference of convention is being planned. And, if fandom as a whole is unorganized, then whatever particular group which does get together and work for the sake of the assemblage will put the accent upon their own views of how the thing should be. Heretofore no one had to worry very much about that. But now a new condition has arisen. We have a small, highly organized, group which is admittedly out to control all fandom and all fan activities. And it is this same Trio-run group which engineered the blackout of reason and democracy in July and October 1939.

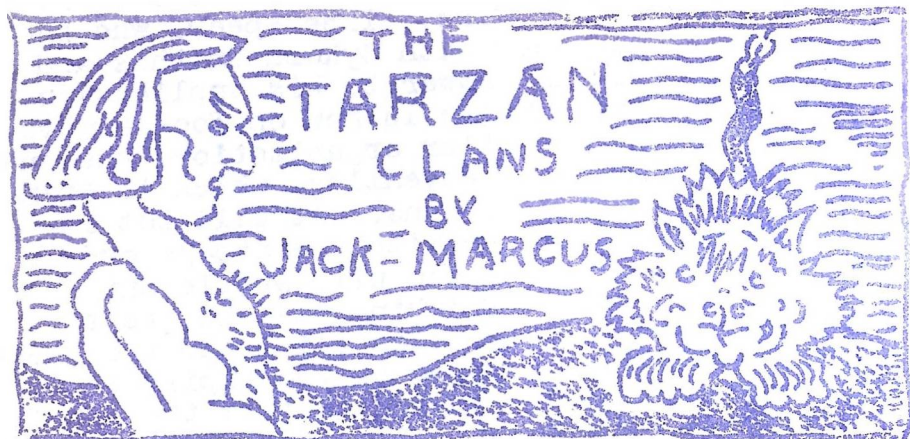
Thus, unless fans are willing to let such groups as these have their way, they must organize into some sort of mutual benefit, protection, and assistance all-fan society. They must organize in such a way that no individual or group will be trampled over in the rush,



We start things off with an apology to John V. Baltadonis. In the last issue of this column (at the time this is being written) we said: "The Science Fiction Collector was good for several years, although publishers were changed." Correction: The Science Fiction Collector is still good, although somewhat irregular in appearance. But then, that is normalcy in most fan magazines. Notable exception to the rule this year has been Harry Warner's "Spaceways" and Sam Youd's "Fantast". We apologize in advance for not mentioning any other magazines which also came up to this incredible standard -- we just do not recall them or haven't seen them. The long feud between Jack Speer and your columnist has at last ended without either party being bombed. Not that these two have become another Damon and Pythias or that we now agree on everything, but that, through mutual concessions and apologies, we agreed that it was damned silly for us to be attacking each other personally on every little thing, when we could spend the same energy so much more profitably through sheer intellectual controversy and co-operation whenever and wherever possible. Jack sums it

up very well in a recent letter from which I quote: "In all probability, I shall do my part to improve relations, but I don't want any deals that might in any way tie me down". What more, we ask, could any honest intellectual ask of another? ... Things we never knew till now department. The FAPA is run by and largely composed of Communists who brand American activities as fascist. Thus sayeth Moskowitz to J.J. Portier. And, before you question that, we might add that Will Sykora has stated firmly but oh so very definitely that no member of the Fandom has ever slandered anyone. So carried away was Will in sheer righteousness that he attempted physical violence upon Wollheim who remarked: "That's a lie," when Willy made the bland statement at the Philly Conference. We thank Will for this overwhelming exhibition of his love for democratic procedure. Know ye all men that the thing to do, at any democratic meeting, when anyone disagrees with you, or calls any of your statements, is to march down the aisle to them and slam hell out of them. In case any one objects, you should explain that this person is a Communist and therefore not entitled to such courtesies as would normally be due opposing opinion at meetings. And, of course, anyone who disagrees with any member of the Trio must be a Communist. Aside to Morel Ackerman, Dale Hart, Dave Kyle, Milt Rothman, Jack Speer, Sam Youd, Jim Avery, Bob Tucker, Ossie Train, etc. etc. ad infinitum: Hi comrades! ... We hereby lay ourselves open to possible air-raids by quoting a recent gem from Jack Speer: "Extra! It had been hoped that in the Loyal and Benevolent Protective Order of Wollheim Stooges, fandom had a powerful organization to fight the dictatorial bludgeonings of oily Will Sykora, since the only membership requirement (See such-and-such-an issue of News Letter) was that the applicant should have disagreed with WSS on some point. However, it is sadly found that the Order is the same old

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small group of NY fans, since Speer, who had sincerely disagreed with Sykora on this and that, received no answer to his application and credential. There is now on foot a movement to start a similar organization, the Indivisible Empire of Juveniles, which is open to all non-Communist fans. It will not intrinsically be at war with the Stooze order. On the contrary, the two will supplement each other, the Stoozes thinking all the great thoughts and the Juveniles doing all the great actions. Another purpose of the Empire is to protect defenseless Juveniles from the imprecations of Grown-Ups. If sufficient interest is shown, work on this phalanx will go ahead".
Hear, hear, say we: while this was obviously written some time ago we suspect that the author has not found himself en rapport with the Trio overnight... Fred Pohl's Literary Agency has now passed into the hands of your writer, since Fred is now editor of an stf magazine -- title, at last report was to be INCREDIBLE. So we invite all fans to use our services which include revisions (minor ones) to fit tricky editorial requirements, criticisms, rewrites or collaborations on a 50-50 basis, and, short of actual ditto, ten percent of the gravy otherwise. No reading fees and we'll try to cut Editor Sloane's old time tradition of two months between receipt and report down to practically immediate ditto. After the first of 1940, of course, at which time we will be found at the Ivory Tower, alias Futurian Apartments, 2574 Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y. .. Frank Belknap Long, Jr. is working on your writer's plot "The Grey One" (published in Spaceways plot department). ...While we remain on the general "purpose of stf" subject, let's quote from a charming friend who recently became introduced to that melange which is fandom: "As regards stf activity, it is true my life and higher aspirations do not depend upon its tremendous success or sudden reverses, but I have



Edgar Rice Burroughs is organizing a group similar in nature to the SOLAR SCOUTS of two years ago. That organization, science-fictional in sound and appearance, was formed by the sponsors of the Buck Rogers radio program. It was an advertising scheme rather than a real organization, yet in a limited sense it could be called a science-fiction club.

Burroughs' new scheme is another such science-fictional organization upon a similar base and for advertising purposes also. It is called the TARZAN CLANS OF AMERICA. Many form letters describing this outfit have been sent out to selected readers of the Burroughs novels along with neat yellow printed application blanks. The Clans are described as a national organization for patriotic American boys of good moral habits over ten years of age. These boys are asked to form clubs in their neighborhoods of other Tarzanys, which will be called "Tarzan Clans", the head of which is a Chief.

An Official Guide of thirty two pages has been issued containing instructions for forming such clans, Officers' Duties, Initiations, Pledges, Grips, Pass Words, Tarzan Games, Songs, a Clan Dance, and finally a Dictionary of the Ape Language.

Of course you may wonder what the catch is in all this. Simple, to get your Card and Guide, merely send Burroughs \$1 (currency or money order) and you will not only have paid your initiation fee of one dollar but in addition out of the goodness of his great big heart, you will receive a brand new two dollar copy of some Tarzan or Venus novel. This you understand is practically a gift.

Surely the organizers of New Fandom, the Futurian Federation, the SFL, and the SFA, are quaking in their pants at the thought of the hordes of Tarzanyas about to descend howling from the treetops on their stf clubs and take them over. Yeeeoocoooww!

Contest

Are you literate? Can you write? (Reading some professional magazines today won't prove that you are literate. However, that's another story for a future issue)

Write us a 200-400 word article on "Why I read Science Fiction". Be moderately serious, don't drool, put in cogent reasons. Send your article to the Editorial Director - otherwise Olon F. Wiggins. "Fan" really wants to know what the more intelligent readers think on this subject.

If any of the articles submitted are worthy of attention they will be published with appropriate acknowledgement to the authors. And - most important - to the author of the best

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of a letter in LIBERTY shortly after protesting that there actually was a man named Karakhan holding a commissariat in Moscow! incidently this same real Karakhan was executed a few years later as a spy and wrecker.

COMMENTARY RWL - Contd. from Page 8

in such a way that the weight of united fandom can quickly descend upon any such psychopaths as the Trio who declare war upon fandom and seek to blackjack all fans and fan groups into their own little concentration-camp organizations. There must be no dictators, no lofty officials who will decide who is and who is not a fan, what fan mags may and may not publish, how conventions may and may not be run,

In other words, a loose federation-like (although not necessarily a federation) society with a constitution just weighty enough to protect members from scoundrels and hypocrites, and light enough to permit all members to have their say and know that their opinions and ideas are being respected, whether or not officials agree with them. An organization which will insure conventions and conferences where fans may display themselves, their ideas, their magazines, drawings, what not, freely, openly, and fraternally.

Just to fill in a bit of otherwise unused space, Fan would like to inform its readers that the centrifugal force of the earth as it travels about the sun is so great that it would snap a steel cable 5000 miles thick. Now one of you readers tell us what this gravitation is that restrains the earth so easily,

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taken an interest in it because I believe
it is an intelligent provocateur of creative
abilities and thinking. I believe it is a
charming springboard into many things and
offers an extensive variety of subjects and
themes to develop along literary, scientific,
political, and artistic lines." ... Dale Hart
has items now and then in the "Lee Lantern",
Official Publication of Lee Junior College,
at which he is a student. Also in the October
31st issue, we noted a sonnet "October" by us.
Thanks, Dale. While on DH, we note that he and
Perc Westmore ---oops, I mean Wilkinson -- are
planning some fan mags that sound rather good.
Most interesting is THE ARGO which will feature
reprint gems that not one fan in a hundred has
seen. For instance, the first issue will be
composed entirely, or almost entirely, of a
letter Joe Hatch has published in Esquire,
concerning time-travelling via suspended ani-
mation. GRIM will be just what the title
suggests. ARABESQUE (we suggested Dale get
Fred Pohl's ok on this as he had planned to
publish a fan mag with that title once in colla-
boration with your writer) will be a magazine
using mostly poetry. ... We publish this in
hopes that Dale will be spurred on and also
to keep R.D. Swisher from running out of
material for his check list. Cheery ho!

CONTEST - Contd. from Page 13.

article (in the Editor's opinion) on the
subject will be awarded a copy of Stanley
Weinbaum's "The New Adam". Closing date
June 1, 1940.



There are four well known methods of beginning a travel-adventure story. I feel regret that I cannot use them all at once, wringing them dry simultaneously of all the delightful and annoying potentialities they possess of teasing the reader close to the point where he is ready to caress your cranium with a brick.

For instance, using method No. 1, otherwise known as the Benchley-Broun-pathetic-humor technique, I would have titled this article "Saga" and opened it something like this: - "As so and so once said, what science fiction always needed was a good five cent saga....." Then, waiting an instant for the hysterical laughter to die away, I would have caught up the tale gaily, in a slightly strained note and ridden roughshod in my English-tweedy way over everybody in sight.

This opening is well suited to a bright, sunshiny spring morning with a touch of rheumatism.

On cloudy, rainy and japanese-beetle infested days, however, the narrator is bound to sense a

sort of Edna St. Vincent Millay feeling creep over him, in which case, the opening would be like this: - "The miles of a continent are so long...." You all know what would have come after that and I can't find it in my heart to condemn you for vomiting.

Method No. 3 is entirely unsuited to my personality and would probably give the public any number of wrong impressions. In using this, you begin by thinking hard about the unpleasant aspects of the trip and set down the first nasty, quibbling thought that comes into your head. This is guaranteed to get you a lot of soured friends and might even result in a libel suit.

Surrealism and Dadaism form the basis of the 4th, particularly the latter. It bears a great resemblance to the style of Will Cuppy and carries within it a note of cheerfully smashing glass as though somebody had bounced a mint julep off the top of your head.

Ugh. No, I cannot, I will not be hack.

Just before we left, my dear friend Cyril Kornbluth was kind enough to inscribe a farewell sonnet on the 1st page of the journal I had purchased for the trip. This is it:-

Use of the Rolling Wheels, I have not wooed
 Your varied-breasted sisters for awhile,
 But aid him that I sing; the gently lewd
 Michel, of carven limbs and shattered smile.
 Make his task sweet and smoothly in his hand;
 Make his pen swift as wings and strong as will;
 Let it be frail and slow as tales command.
 But may be by your grace, be bent to fill
 This volume with what comes to eye or ear...
 The multiplying wonders of a land.
 From city pavements shall the party steer

A lonely, merry way and to the band
Which dare it, Muse, I ask but that you say,
"We who remain bless you and hold you dear."

Pretty, isn't it. And of course I never heeded it. The journal was never touched. It's pages are as virgin as the lips of a science fiction fan. I took it out at the close of the second day, shuddered and put it away. I had nothing to say. As a matter of fact, I won't talk even now. You'll have to see my lawyer.

But memories are strong, stronger indeed than the cheese in Chicago which is saying a lot. I will take a leaf, therefore, from the life of Speer and present the facts in the form of Vital Statistics.

You have only yourselves to blame if you read them.

FACES AND BODIES: -

Lowndes : - Sleepy, half-naked and familiar. Warn us to take him to Providence to visit the Lovecraft shrine. We threw him out.

Louis Kuslen:- Heavy, dark, hesitating. Unwitting kleptomaniac around typewriters.

Gertrude Kuslan : - Compact, vivacious, vaguely snub-nosed, pert and pretty. Imagines herself a rhymster. Corn-fed complexion. Oomph.

R.D. Swisher : - Big, newfoundlanddoggyish, sincere reserved, a poor chinese-checker player but dead at ping-pong. Quiet, but terribly interested.

Mrs. Swisher : - The Blue-Bells of Scotland type. Excellent cook, housewife and conversationalist.

Pretty but poor sport at chinese checkers. She can't take it. Used personal charm unfairly to wheedle advantageous positions out of opposition. Anarchic ping-pong player.

Litterio B. Farsaci: - White, intense, gives impression of working at writing with terrific sincerity. Has letter from R. Tristram Coffin praising his poetry. Poetry poeey. The family, like most Italians very hospitable. Excellent wine.

Bernard A. Seufert: - Tall, colorless, a self-admitted Fascist. Evidently sincere. Seems lost in the great big world. Interesting listener. Aloof.

Richard I. Meyer : - Juvenile, high-schoolish. A fan.

Lawrence Hamling:- Juvenile, high-schoolish, high pressure. Self-consciously editor of biggest prep-school magazine in Ammedica. Another Conover with half the talent probably because with half the neurosis. A fan.

Bob Tucker: - Thin, wiry, reporter-on-the-Blanktown-creech type. Marvelous sense of withered humor. Sincere and a jolly good fellow. Never a dull moment. A wine bibber after my own boquet. About the easiest to meet and get along with of any of the people we met. Can smell science fiction fans a block away. Bolsheviks two blocks.

Alter Marconette: - Mountainous, awkward. Lives precariously between and beneath towering stacks of magazines. Openminded. Takes great pride in having been the first to bring boaster Miske to heel. Has amiable and enthusiastic grandmother long lines of an anemic May Robson. She never evenatted an eyelash when informed two Bolsheviks would spend the night in her own home.

Mary G. Byers:- Hidden behind a shell two-thirds of a mile thick. Obviously self-conscious about over-active case of acne (haven't we all) covering an otherwise pretty face. Astonished to see us. Hedged badly and kept insisting on vague connections with everybody. Very difficult to establish diplomatic relations with. Offered us rhubarb pie and intellectual repartee bordering on hysteria. Interview fairly successful up to point where Wollheim snapped a closeup of her despite earnest pleading of photophobia. Fled into house and wasn't seen again.

Jack Speer:- Dry, papery, quick on the trigger, cynical. Thoroughly honest except when he isn't. Colorless and I wonder what he does for fun. Very dangerous opponent in debate, training in law having developed well-known human trait of hairsplitting to unprecedented degree. Obviously contemptuous of me. Looked startled when I described Wollheim as a more brilliant political theorist than myself. Atmosphere created by this admission comparable to confession by Baronovsky that he had in his possession the remains of the entire Imperial Family of Russia. Speer can't understand unanimity of Michelist line despite conflicting views on Michelism expressed in various articles by myself, Wollheim, Lowndes and Pohl. Evidently never heard of democracy. When asked whereabouts of John W. Bristol, Speer went white and collapsed gibbering.

MOST EASILY REMEMBERED: -

The Swisher hospitality.

Speer bleeding copiously, holding handkerchief to his nose to stem the flow and quibbling with Wollheim over the exact definition of a socialist state

The young girl in the hotel room across the street from the YMCA in Columbus, Ohio, (Wollheim and myself invariably bedded down together) who first

pulled up all the shades and disrobed under a battery of lights. (Of course we looked!)

The building in Schenectady we stumbled into while looking for a library and which had a room filled with people and a huge sign stretched across one end reading "Workers of the World, Unite!"

The drunken garageman in Chicago, who, after fixing the handle on our car door, ripped off by a curious native asked whimsically how we had gotten the crate across the continent.

The toper attendant at the inn in a little mountain settlement in West Virginia who sold us accommodations for the night and embarrassed Wilson no end by offering to provide bedwarmers for the duration of the wee sma' hours in the form of delectable samples of the local femininity. (No, we didn't!)

The strange, brooding atmosphere of the portion of Massachusetts used by Lovecraft as the locale of many of his stories.

PET HATES:- Chicago's Black Cow sodas.
Canada's roads, shot to hell.
The beer in Toronto.
The beer in Chicago.
Chicago
The parking regulations from end of the trip to the other.
The car motor.
The mountains of West Virginia.
The barbers in Springfield, Ohio, who never work on Wednesdays.
Wilson.
Wollheim.

ACCIDENTS? MISHAPS, DEATHS, etc.

Gary, Indiana:- Burned out cylinder bearing. Smashed oil pump.

Chicago, Illinois:- Motor developed cow-bell noise
Front door handle torn off.

Bloomington, Illinois:- Speedometer went insane,
began chattering like a bally old barnyard. Motor
sympathetically slipped fan belt.

Urbana, Indiana (or maybe Ohio):- Broken rear axle
Speedometer completely out of control sounding like
a rooster caught in a picket fence.

Somewhere between the mountains of West Virginia and
Washington, D.C.:- Revolving flexible shaft connect-
ing motor to speedometer snapped. Indicator veered
wildly between zero and ninety miles an hour. Noises
like a woodpecker beating its mate to death emanated
suddenly from beneath the motor hood. We looked. No
woodpecker.

CITIES:- Providence:- Lost. Boston:- Ugh! Scher
ectady:- Ordinary. Toronto:- Veddy British, bobbies,
God-save-the-king and all that. Detroit:- Blank.
Chicago:- Cancerous. Bloomington:- The aftermath
of a summer rain. Dayton:- Bourgeois. Indianapolis:-
Main Street. Columbus:- Human. Washington:-Washington
Philadelphia:- Still a gigantic slum. New York:-
Baby, here we come!

OBSERVATION: -

American cities are invariably "the best little
town in (name county, state or country), - "The Mecca
of the Middle West" or "The Home of the American
Passion Play", saddled with city halls the crummiest
village in Siberia wouldn't be caught dead with;
death traps easy to get into and hard to get away
from, full of Woolworth stores, "Hot Spots" dis-
pensing local joy juices, whole batteries of signs
screaming "You can't do this and you can't do that!"
and the prettiest, red-cheeked, silk-hosed agglom-
eration of oomph in sixty three degrees of longti-
tude. The most beautiful shafts in the world are
not the Trylon, the Eiffel Tower or the Empire State
building, but the legs of the average American girl.