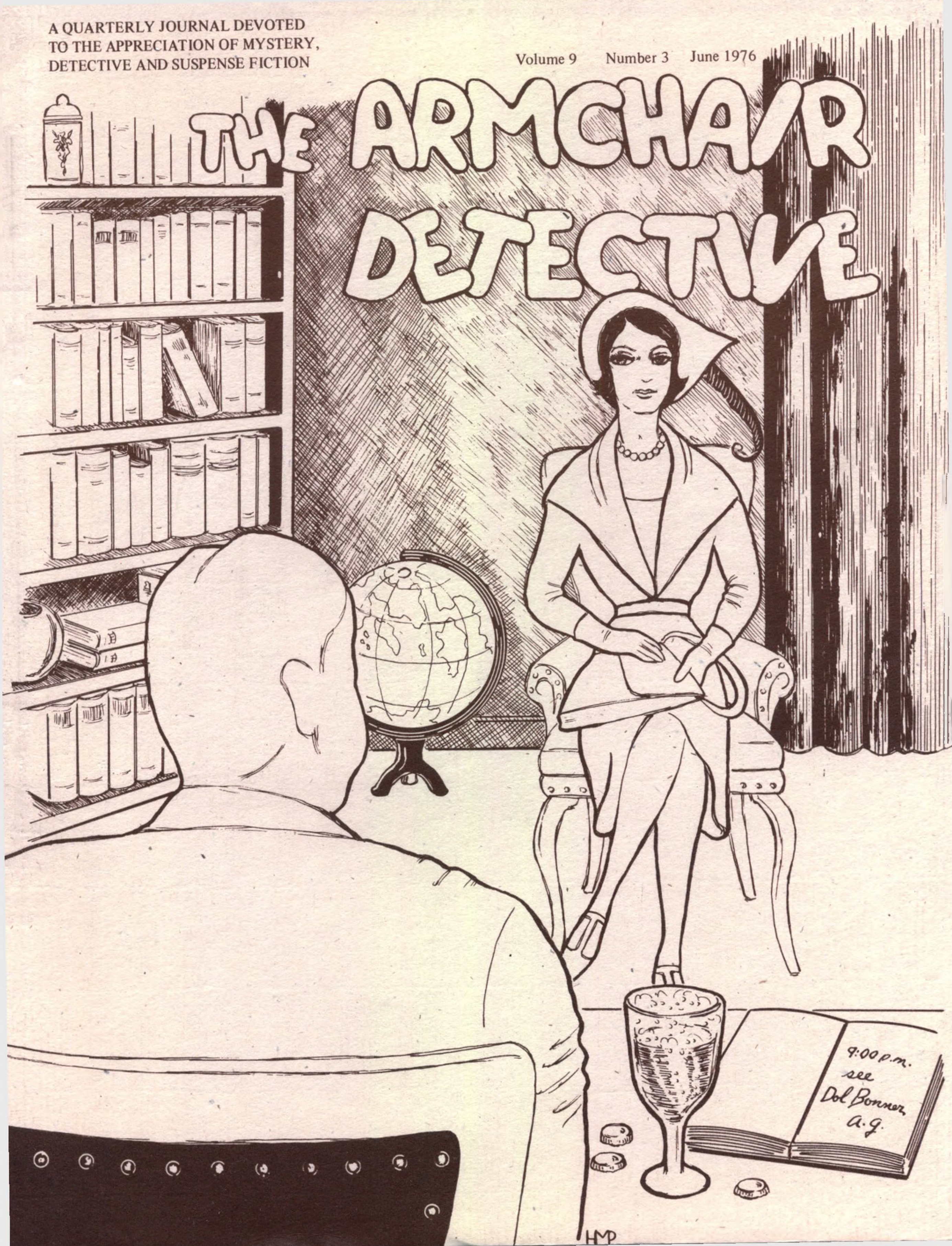
A QUARTERLY JOURNAL DEVOTED
TO THE APPRECIATION OF MYSTERY,
DETECTIVE AND SUSPENSE FICTION
Volume 9 Number 3 June 1976
THE ARMCHAIR
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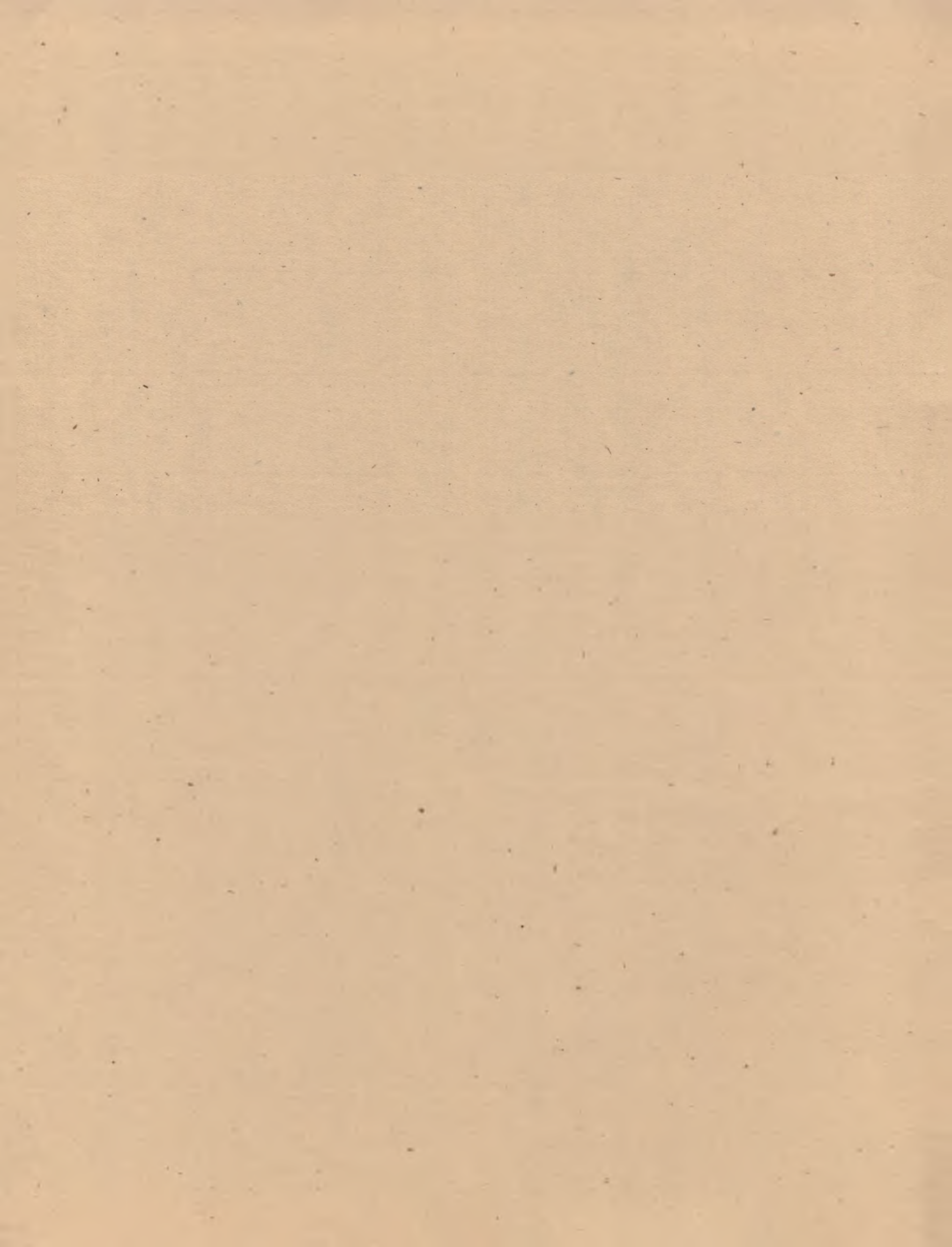

The ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE

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Subscriptions to *The Armchair Detective*: $10/year in the U.S., $12.50 elsewhere. Subscription and advertising correspondence should be addressed to: TAD, 243 Twelfth Street, Drawer P, Del Mar, CA 92014, U.S.A. Submissions of material for publication are welcome and should be addressed to The Editor: Allen J. Hubin, 3656 Midland Ave., White Bear Lake, Minn. 55110, U.S.A.

Application to mail at second-class postage rates is pending at Del Mar, California.

The Armchair Detective, June, 1976, vol. 9, no. 3. Published quarterly by Publisher's Inc., 243 Twelfth St., Del Mar, CA 92014.

Cover artwork by Helen Pollack.

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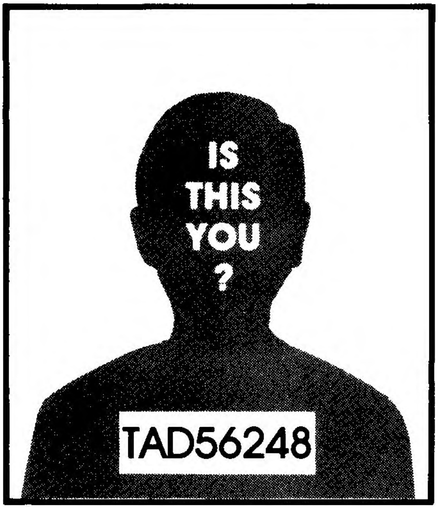
The Uneasy Chair . . . 165
Letters . . . 167
Shadow Gallery: An Informal Survey of Cover Art of the Seventies, by Frank Eck . . . 170
New Gaslight on Jack the Ripper, by Albert I. Borowitz . . . 175
Our Heroes in Motley, by Edward Lauterbach . . . 178
Rodrigues Ottolengui (1861-1937): A Forgotten American Mystery Writer, by Wendell Hertig Taylor . . . 181
Mr. & Mrs. North, by R. Jeff Banks . . . 182
G. K. Chesterton's Father Brown, by Robert A. W. Lowndes . . . 184
Edmund Wilson and the Detective Story, by Carl Byron Dickson . . . 189
Wicked Dreams: The World of Sheridan Le Fanu, by David Brownell . . . 191
A Rendell Dozen Plus One, by Jo Ann Genaro Vicarel . . . 198
Lady in a Straightjacket, by Frank D. McSherry, Jr. . . . 201
What the World Waited For, by Charles Shibuk and Marvin Lachman . . . 203
Bouchercon . . . 207
Crime Writers International Conference . . . 207
The Paperback Revolution, by Charles Shibuk . . . 208
A Catalogue of Crime (Supplement Two), by J. B. and W. H. T. . . . 209
A Checklist of Mystery, Detective and Suspense Fiction Published in the U.S., January-March 1976, by M. S. Cappadonna . . . 210
Paper Crimes, by Fred Dueren . . . 212
A View from Wall Street: Social Criticism in the Mystery Novels of Emma Lathen, by Jane S. Bakerman . . . 213
Current Material Reviews . . . 218
Retrospective Reviews . . . 225
Classified Ads . . . 241
Book Exchange . . . 242

WANTED

BY T.A.D. (THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE)



J. Q. CRIMEBUFF

ALIAS: J. Q. Mysteryfan, "Sherlock Slim," "Nero the Wolf"

DESCRIPTION: Age, between 10 and 95. Chronically bloodshot eyes (from reading until 3 a.m.) Frequents used bookstores, magazine racks.

VIOLATION: Mystery-story addiction. Pusher and habitual user of hardcover and paperback crime. Dangerous if crossed by an author. Known to be armed with intense loyalty to favorite writers. Approach with caution.

If you have information about the suspect — or if you ARE the suspect — subscribe immediately to THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE, the oldest and most authoritative journal of the mystery/detective/suspense genre.

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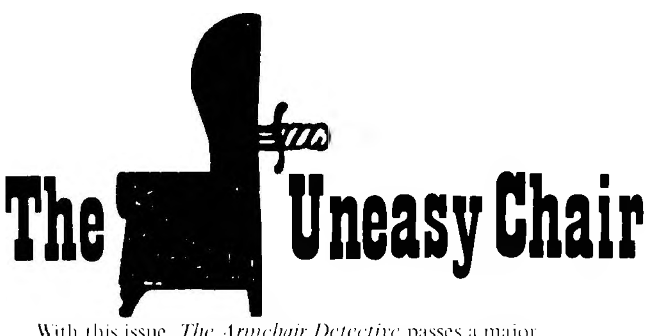
- M. Murdoch Duncan - Master of Mystery, by Donald Ireland
- Mystery Stories in Japan, by Katsuo Jinka
- Margery Allingham's Albert Campion, by B.A. Pike
- A Catalogue of Crime, by Jacques Barzun and Wendell Hertig Taylor
- Comic Construction in the Novels of Emma Lathen and R. B. Dominic, by David Brownell
- Lew Archer's "Moral Landscape," by Elmer R. Pry, Jr.
- Ellery Queen in Wrightsville, by Francis M. Nevins, Jr.
- On *Lolita* as a Mystery Story, by J. R. Christopher
- The Clue of the Dying Message, by R. W. Hays

And scores more. TAD is a "must" for the confirmed mystery buff. Early issues of TAD (now in its ninth year) are collector's items.

If the description of J. Q. Crimebuff fits you or someone you know, order TAD today by filling out the attached postage-paid card. If card is missing write to The Armchair Detective, 243 12th Street, Drawer P, Del Mar, CA 92014.



With this issue, *The Armchair Detective* passes a major milestone and enters *terra incognita*. Well, almost *incognita*. We really aren't sure what lies ahead. But we *do* know what lies behind the June issue of TAD.

Behind this issue are eight and one-half years of pioneering effort by one man . . . the man who brought TAD into the world, and who, for more than eight years, edited and published this quarterly in his home. Allen J. Hubin personally edited all manuscripts, typed copy for the printer and with the aid of a tolerant and understanding wife and family gathered, stapled, stuffed and mailed more than a thousand copies of TAD every three months to subscribers all over the world. Al personally carried on all correspondence from his home in White Bear Lake, Minnesota (which also houses his formidable collection of some 25,000 mysteries), kept records on subscribers, answered inquiries from readers and writers, and performed the thousand-and-one chores which in most publishing enterprises are divided among various members of the staff.

Early this year it became clear to Al that he could not much longer carry such a load which grew heavier by the day and that he would need help if TAD were to continue to serve its ever-widening audience of mystery detective suspense fans. Also, it was evident that new sources of revenue would need to be generated to support the ever-rising costs of production and mailing.

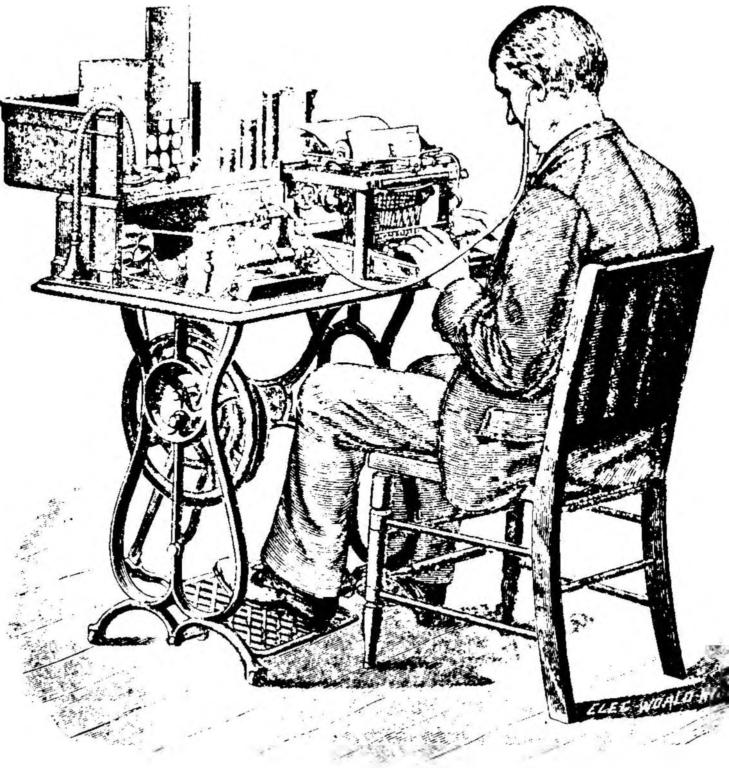
Fortunately, Al's function as a member of the Editorial Board of The Mystery Library (about which, more in the next issue of TAD) brought him in touch with the publishers of The Mystery Library: Publisher's Inc., and an agreement was reached wherein Al would continue as Editor-in-Chief, while Publisher's Inc. would take over all production and distribution details.

Al was thus relieved of the time-consuming administrative chores, and now may devote himself exclusively to the editorial content of TAD. At the same time, he is relieved of financial concerns, as the responsibility for the solicitation of advertising and new subscribers now lies with Publisher's Inc.

In the next issue, we will have more to say about the history of TAD and its founder-editor, Allen J. Hubin. We will take you inside Al's home to show in photos and text how Al and his family produced TAD for nearly a decade as a "cottage industry." Watch for this feature in the September issue.

David Hellyer

David Hellyer
Managing Editor
The Armchair Detective



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Letters

From Jean-Jacques Schleret (France):

Further to A. J. Wright's "Movie Note" on *The Enforcer* in the November TAD: The first director, Bretaigne Windust, was fired by Warner Bros. after a few days because he was "too weak and inefficient" and Raoul Walsh finished the movie (see Martin Rackin's interview in *Presence du Cinema*, No. 14, June 1962). Although there was an original screenplay by Rackin, the story was based on *Murder Inc.* by Bruton B. Turkus and Sid Feders. A novelization of this movie was made by the English mystery writer James Eastwood under the same title (*The Enforcer*) and published in France in the Serie Noire under the French movie title, *La Femme a Abattre*.

TAD readers might be interested in a list of 27 pseudonyms used by George Simenon, as reported in *Magazine Litteraire*: Germain d'Antibes, Bobette, Christian Brulls, Jacques Dersonne, Jean Dorsage, Luc Dorsan, Georges-Martin, Gom Gut, Georges d'Isly, Kim, Jean du Perry, Plick et Plock, Poum et Zette, Jean Sandor, Georges Sim, G. Violis, Gaston Vialis, Aramis, George Caraman, J-K. Charles, La deshabilleuse, Gemis, Misti, Miquette, Monsieur Lecoq, Pan, and Trott!

* * * * * * * *

From Allan Kleinberg:

The readers supplement to the H-Q cornerstones was very welcome. I was surprised at how many volumes Messrs. Katchnik and Aucott nominated. Have Haycraft-Queen ever considered adding a post-1948 supplement, up to, say, 1970? Would they include Ian Fleming (really, how could Ellery Queen leave *For Your Eyes Only* out of Queen's Quorum?).

B & T's supplements, I hope will continue. Perhaps they will get around to the 60-odd John Dickson Carr titles they ignored (forgot?) and will also give Queen and P. MacDonald better treatment.

I am moved to a protest of some violence concerning J. M. Purcell's review of Crispin's *The Case of the Gilded Fly*. I found most of it rather obscure—but I fail to see how Fen is classified as a "Vance-Fell bastard." In this story, Fen is prepared to warn the culprit and give him a head start before revealing his identity to the police, but a second murder, which Fen couldn't foresee, changes his mind. Although the murderer is basically a victim of circumstance (he was being blackmailed by the victim) Fen denounces him, reluctantly. This is a bastard? In many Dr. Fell novels he lets the murderer off (*Dead Man's Knock* and *The Arabian Nights Murder* come immediately to mind) because the victim deserved what he got. Fell is a bastard? Strange, Mr. Purcell . . . .

While looking through some older TAD's I came across Jon L. Breen's TADpoll (Vol. 6, No. 2). I think it's about time for another. So, if anyone is interested, I thought a good poll would be "The Great Detective's Greatest Cases." I've listed 16 detectives and one secret agent and I invite TAD readers to send me a postcard or letter (to 501 Cranford Road, Cherry Hill, N. J. 08003) listing their favorite novels (one each) featuring: Roderick Alleyn, John Appleby, James Bond, Albert Campion, Charlie Chan, Gideon Fell, Gervase Fen, Anthony Gethryn, Jane Marple, Henry Merrivale, Hercule Poirot, Ellery Queen, Roger Sheringham, Nigel Strangeways, Philo Vance, Peter Wimsey, and Nero Wolfe. It will be interesting to see if we TADdicts agree with the Haycraft/Queen list or *Catalogue of Crime*.

* * * * * * * *

From Charles Shibuk:

Reader John Vining might be interested to know that he has been misinformed (TAD 9/2) about the source of *The Shadow Strikes*. It is not based on a George Harmon Coxe story, but is derived from *The Ghost of the Manor* by Maxwell Grant.

Note might also be taken of Bruce Graeme's *Epilogue* (1933), wherein Supt. William Stevens (without the aid of Inspector Allain, this time) wakes up in the 19th century and proceeds to investigate and solve the mystery of Edwin Drood.

* * * * * * * *

From Randy Cox:

The *Ellery Queen* show may be trash as the rest of the TAD readership would agree, but I still enjoy it. I just realized it may be unique in having an amateur detective (in a TV sea of policemen and private detectives), and is probably the only real whodunit (I don't get to watch *McMillan and Wife* that much—I seem to recall one didn't always know who the killer was at the start) since everything else is street crime. (I don't count *Cannon* and many of the private eye shows where one doesn't care who did it . . . even when you do know.)

However, there is material out there I don't like . . . I speak of the avenging angel genre, like The Executioner. I was actually tempted to try one by the many comments in TAD . . . and put it down un-read except for the first 60 pages. I couldn't become interested in the story or what happened to the characters, and I couldn't believe the motivation for his war against the mafia. Since the Destroyer books are supposed to be better (?) I've begun one. I *think* I'm going to be able to finish, but I'm certainly not going to spend much time on it! I would disagree with John Vining's suggestion (in his review of Coxe's

Error of Judgment) about the pulp story having died. It's still living in these books. Only the times and style have changed.

In checking over my George Harmon Coxe files I ran across several copies of the checklist of his works which I compiled for TAD. I must have typed that thing six times before I found the right format . . . and in the final typing I *omitted two stories* from 1934! One of these was already mentioned by Frank McSherry in a letter a few issues back, "The Flaming Shadow" from *Dime Detective* for Oct. 1, 1934. The other, in case anyone cares, was "For Acquittal" in *Complete Stories* for Oct. 14, 1934.

Unfortunately, no one came forward with information on the pulp stories which I couldn't assign to either a specific magazine or to which I could assign a date. Several stories were by-lined "by George Harmon Coxe, author of . . ." In several instances I was unable to find the story referred to. These were "No Quarter," "The Black Box," "Murder Debt" which may have appeared in *Thrilling Detective*, or one of its companion pulps, in the mid-thirties. I'm also still looking for a Saalfield Big Little Book (apparently a rival to the Whitman series) which, according to the *Cumulative Book Index*, published Coxe's novelette, *Peril Afloat*, in book form. In addition, I'm still looking for copies of both editions of the Avon collection, *Flash Casey, Detective* (large format and small format), and a cartoon strip version of *Four Frightened Women*, and issues of *Casey, Crime Photographer* comic book (numbers 2 and 3), as well as Paul Ayres' (Edw. S. Aarons) *Dead Heat* (an adaptation-pastiche of Casey as done on the radio). Since I seem to have fallen into the position of "official" authority/collector of Coxe's works, I would like to hear from anyone with additional information (articles, reviews, stories I've missed, memorabilia) relating to him. Radio scripts and tapes are included in this, of course.

* * * * * * * *

From Mr. & Mrs. George Madison:

Whatever happened to the entertaining Jonathan Hemlock? We were introduced to this amoral James Bond in *The Eiger Sanction*, 1972; he reappeared in the *Loo Sanction*, 1973, and has never again been seen. These books by Trevanian featured some very good writing, with a special emphasis on art collecting. Has Trevanian discontinued the series? Who is Trevanian?

One of the greatest joys of reading is to discover a character who captivates and lives on in memory long after the book is finished. For us, Robert Parker's Spencer, created in *The Godwulf Manuscript*, is one such character. The sequels, *God Save the Child* and *Mortal Stakes*, are of equal quality. Parker makes it easy to involve oneself with this engaging, wisecracking detective from the Hammett/Chandler school. We specially note the dialogue, which never fails to entertain. We hope this is a long running series.

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From David Marohl:

I found the review of the Sayers biography in the November TAD very interesting. The passage on lesbianism reminded me of a common fallacy of reviewers . . . a fallacy that irritates me more each time I see it.

The creation of an inventive mind should not, repeat NOT be blithely taken for the incarnation of that mind.

I have just read the work of a reviewer who blandly assumed that Ishmael was Melville. In order to support his thesis, this literary cuckoo calmly postulated a few blaring, glaring, outrageously staring falsehoods.

It is so easy to write a biography in that manner . . . who needs to know anything about the author's life?

So many of these constipated scriveners, lacking the ability to do anything on their own hook, pry open the closets of the talented, displaying these sad little secrets in the unkind light of day.

I have given up reading these biographies. These sad little tragedies do not tell us as much about the individual concerned as they do about the circumstances in which that individual found him-/herself.

Perhaps I have overstated the case. Occasionally, a biographical reference may prove very useful.

Several years ago, for reasons which I need not go into, I navigated my way through Whittaker Chambers' autobiography *Witness.* For me, the most interesting item in the whole interminable mass of print was a single line reference to Rex Stout's sister, who Chambers had lunched with. This passing note suggests motivations for Stout's odd political history—strongly jingoistic in the '40s; overwhelmingly cautious in the '50s; with a suddenly apparent hatred for the F.B.I. in the '60s (c.f. *The Doorbell Rang*); and a tremendous antipathy for Nixon, Chambers' powerful ally of the McCarthy era, in his latest, last book (*A Family Affair*).

By the way, isn't the last line of *A Family Affair* rather beautifully appropriate for the close of a distinguished career?

* * * * * * * *

From E. F. Bleiler:

The Dover program of detective, mystery, fantasy classics has moved up from snail grade to inchworm, and we now have the following items in the works. This April 1st or so, the following were issued:

The Riddle of the Sands by Erskine Childers
The Golem by Gustav Meyrink and *The Man Who Was Born Again* by Paul Busson. A double volume. We have restored much material that hadn't been translated before—perhaps 20%—and made many corrections, so that for all practical purposes these are the first English translations.
Richmond, Episodes in the Life of a Bow Street Runner. We have repasted this into a single volume, uncut.

In August or early September, the next three:

Best Cases of Martin Hewitt by Arthur Morrison. We have reproduced periodical parts from Strand and Windsor, with all the original illustrations.
Dee Goong An, under a new title, *Celebrated Cases of Judge Dee,* translated by Robert van Gulik. This is the authentic Chinese novel, not the pastiches Gulik himself wrote.
Great Cases of the Thinking Machine by Jacques Futrelle. This second (and probably final) collection picks up periodical stories that haven't (for the most part) been reprinted before.

December 1976 or early January 1977:

Armadale by Wilkie Collins.
South Wind by Norman Douglas. We won't carry this as a mystery, but it *is* based on a murder.

Next year, some time, no exact dates:

Collected Ghost Stories of Mrs. J. H. Riddell. Next to Le Fanu, the best mid-Victorian practitioner.
The Department of Dead Ends by Roy Vickers.
Exploits of Fidelity Dove by Roy Vickers.
The Chinese Maze Murders. The Haunted Monastery by R. van Gulik. A double-volume.
East Lynne by Mrs. Ellen Wood.
The Exploits of Eugene Valmont by Robert Barr.
Best Old Man in the Corner Stories by Baroness Orczy. Original periodical parts.
Gothic Short Stories. True, early 19th century Gothic material, not the miscellaneous junk that is sometimes called Gothic.

* * * * * * * *

From Jiro Kimura:

Enter the Thief, a collection of Nick Velvet stories by Edward D. Hoch, was released in Japan on February 29, 1976. This Japanese translation of Velvet adventures includes, using the abbreviations of "Edward D. Hoch: A Checklist" in February 1976 issue of TAD, NV No. 1, No. 4, No. 7, No. 10, No. 11, No. 12, No. 13, No. 14, No. 17, No. 18, No. 21, and No. 23, with Hoch's preface and my afterword. The Weekly *Asahi* calls him "Nezumi Kozo" (The Mouse Kid, who steals from the rich and gives money to the needy) and feels that "it is recent fun to know this clever, brave and fascinating thief as a new Lero." I call him a modern-day Robin Hood who goes after the possessions of other crooks.

I want to add to "Donald E. Westlake: A Checklist," in the May 1975 issue of TAD: *Philip,* a juvenile book by D. E. Westlake (1967: Crowell) and his latest *Brothers Keepers,* a religious comedy (1975: M. Evans).

I recently learned from Justin Scott that not only does Lawrence Block write as "Chip Harrison," he is also "Paul Kavanagh."

SHADOW GALLERY: AN INFORMAL SURVEY OF COVER ART OF THE SEVENTIES

EXHIBITION ONE – A COVER ART TRIBUTE TO AGATHA CHRISTIE

By Frank Eck

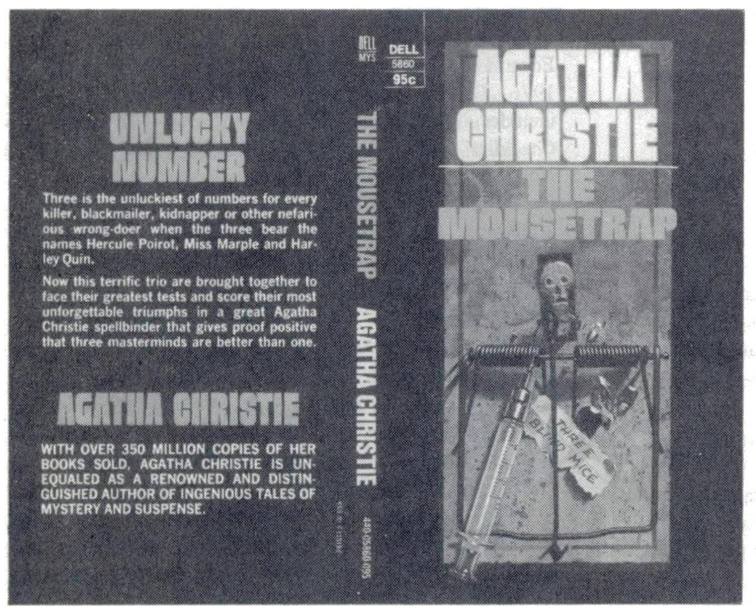
Copyright 1976 by Frank Eck

These pages open onto the largest art gallery in the world: that of hardcover, paperback and magazine cover art. It is a gallery of mass market images that reach an audience ranging from construction workers on high steel, to corporate executives in high towers, to the counter culture high on anything.

The cover artists who practice their craft on these fleeting vehicles work in a medium as transitory and short-lived as last season's fashions or the previous year's car model. Their exhibits are held in a shadow gallery whose branches span the globe and admission can be gained through any city, town or village bookshop. However, unlike the sedate and prestigious New York and Paris galleries, this shadow gallery at times resembles more a Baghdad bazaar aswirl with garish, clashing colors and tumultuous motions. Like a barrage of coded psychic messages, these mass market images compete for our attention and subsequent purchase. Turn any corner, of whatever bookshop you are in, and the exhibit is transformed much like a revolving kaleidoscope—one moment fantastic and wondrous landscapes from over the hills and far away and the next the stark, threatening cityscape of a killer in the rain; turn again and you are transported on a space odyssey.

Shadow Gallery will attempt to exhibit some of the finest hardcover and paperback cover art currently being done in the crime-suspense genre. For too long, the artists who enliven our field with their uniquely visual interpretations of the crime fiction world have existed in a twilight limbo of audience recognition. This series of articles, of which this is the first, will attempt to introduce to the crime-suspense aficionado the best of the cover artists, who provide us with a graphic art history that complements and enhances the written "art of murder."

Shadow Gallery opens with a paperback cover art tribute to Agatha Christie. The focus will be restricted to current artwork, since it is beyond our abilities to cover the entire fifty-year time spectrum of Agatha Christie cover art that had its beginnings with such paintings as W. Smithham Broadhead's mid-twenties portrait of Hercule Poirot for *The Weekly Sketch.*



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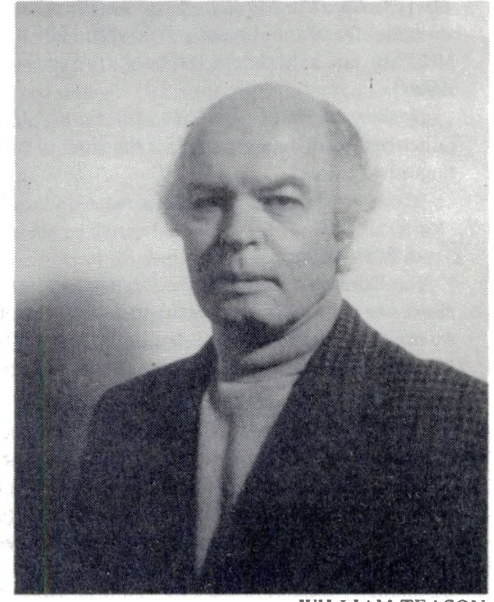


WILLIAM TEASON

WILLIAM TEASON

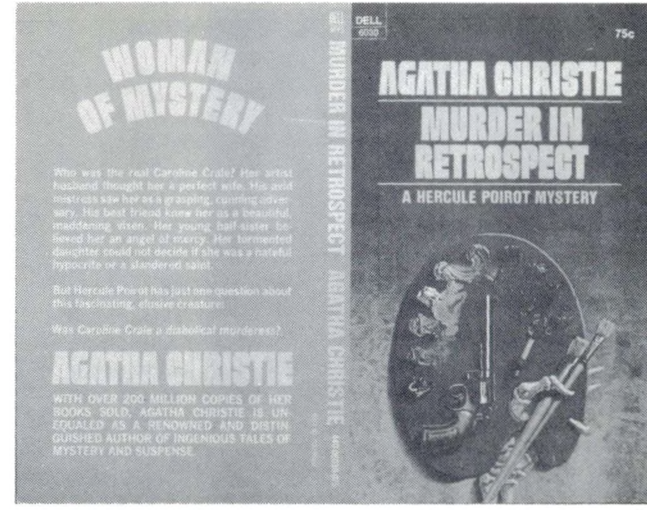
A name almost synonymous with Agatha Christie cover illustration is that of William Teason. Few artists can claim credit for a more distinctive and consistently inventive series of cover paintings for a one-author line of books. Since his earliest Christie cover, *The Man in the Brown Suit* (1958), which launched his long association with Dell Books, Teason has created over 100 paintings for more than 30 Christie titles, doing as many as five different versions of some covers.

In these paintings he achieves almost a symbiotic relationship between his covers and the content of the work illustrated. Executed in gouache, a water soluble medium, his covers are primarily still life renderings, notable for their highly realistic and symbolic presentation of key clues.

The extent of his artistic achievement in meeting the demands of an ever-changing and competitive market can best be perceived when one understands the extensive research and knowledge that each cover requires. The period after receiving a commission from Dell for a new cover is one of intensive preparation that begins with a careful reading of each book for its primary clues or mood. Following this, Teason then visualizes a graphic representation of these clues in terms of color, shape, texture and their placement in a given space. The process involves a constant search for new props and materials with which to realistically portray these images. In this, his wife Erma frequently assists him by researching the objects to be drawn and often, if the items are not available, making them herself. (One of the recent "objects" that she created was a voodoo doll.)

Originally from Kansas City, Mo., Teason has for the past 27 years lived with his wife Erma in Bergenfield, N.J. His career as a commercial artist began in 1946 and he started freelancing in 1951, doing advertising and movie posters in addition to book covers. He has been a recipient of the Mystery Writers of America "Raven" award for the following covers: *Picture Miss Seeton* by Heron Carvic (Popular Library, 1970); *Daughters of Darkness* by J. R. Lowell (Dell, 1974) and *The Mousetrap* by Agatha Christie (Dell, 1975). In 1974, he was honored by the New York Society of Illustrators with a one-man retrospective exhibition of 90 of his Agatha Christie cover paintings.

A. 1974
B. 1974
C. 1967
D. 1968
E. 1968
F. 1971



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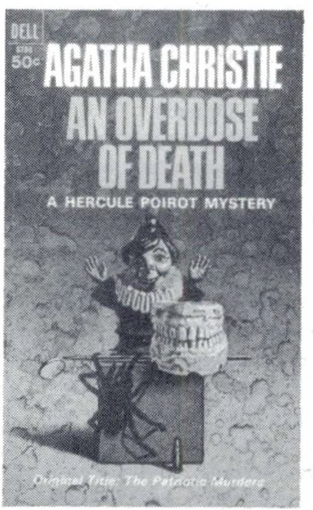

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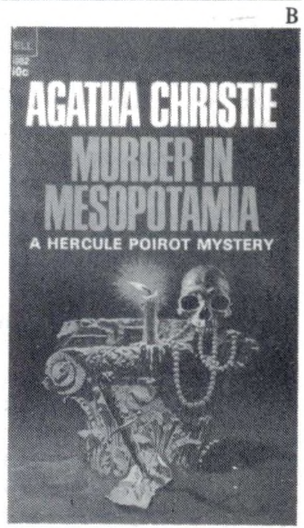


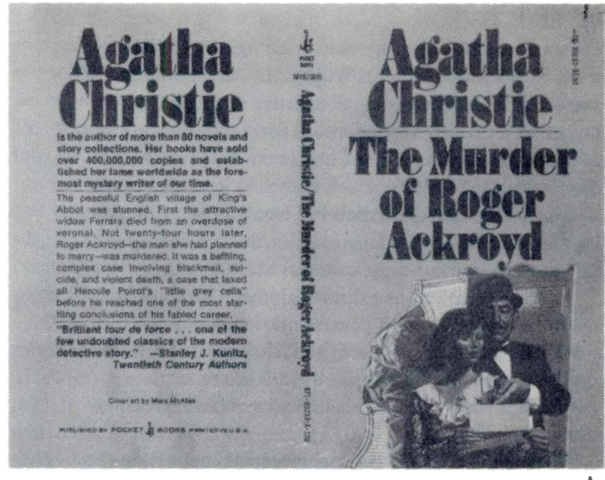
D

E

F

MARA McAFEE

One of the brightest new talents in the paperback cover art field today is Mara McAfee. Before her professional career began in New York, McAfee studied at the Chauinard Institute in Los Angeles and the Art Students League in New York. Since then she has had one-man shows at the Amel Gallery and Eileen Kuhlik Gallery in New York Her illustrations have appeared in such varied magazines as *Playboy, Good Housekeeping* and *MS*. At present she is a contributing artist to *National Lampoon* Magazine and a contract artist to Simon and Schuster Pocket Books. McAfee's most recent work includes the six A. A. Fair (Erle Stanley Gardner) covers, distinctive for their light-hearted "campy" look, and the eight new Agatha Christie covers that are without a doubt the finest depiction of Hercule Poirot and Jane Marple to date. These Christie covers portray a scene out of the story as a "set-still" with a background image providing the suspense. Her portrayal of the dapper, egotistical Poirot springs to life, with all his vitality, humor and shrewd little grey cells depicted with great depth and range. Mara McAfee's cover illustrations convey great warmth and nostalgic atmosphere and in her own words make murder "charming."



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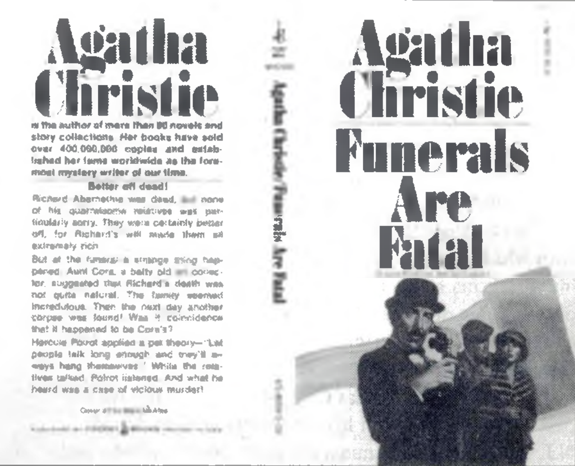

B

A. 1976
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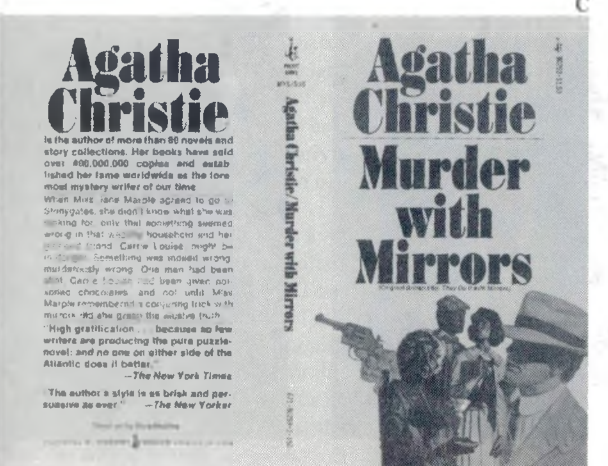
C



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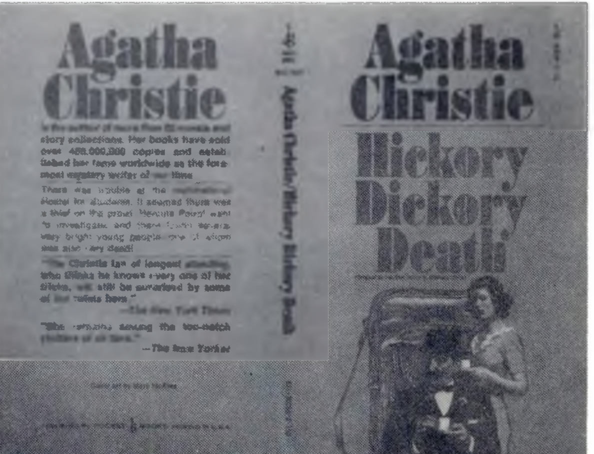
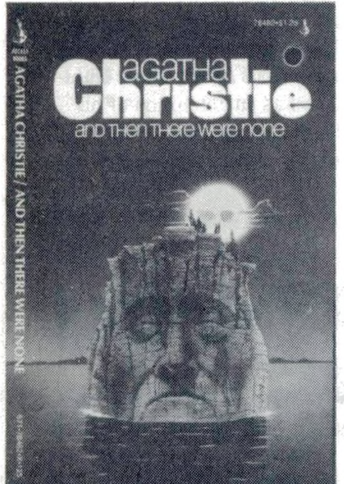


ALAN MAGEE

One of the most imitated and influential artists in the field of cover art illustration today is Alan Magee. His career began in 1968 while he was attending the Philadelphia College of Art. Since that time he has worked for various publications such as the *New York Times,* Pocket Books, Ballantine Books, and *New York Magazine.* In his cover art work, he attempts to recreate the *mood* of the book without actually depicting a specific scene from it, thereby allowing his and the readers' imagination free rein. A perfect example of this approach can be seen in his rendering of Agatha Christie's classic novel, *And Then There Were None.* It is certainly one of the most striking and effective Christie covers ever done. Employing the media of water color, with detail rendered by an airbrush, the cover conveys an eerie atmosphere of desolation and decay. Unforgettable is the haunting effect of a death mask wrought on the exterior rock surface of an island emerging from still dark waters illuminated by the icy light of a full moon.

Other examples of Alan Magee's work can be seen on *The Undead,* edited by James Dickey (Pocket Books, 1976), and *The Natural* by Bernard Malamud (Pocket Books, 1973). Outside of the illustration field he is planning an exhibition of his paintings dealing with the mysteries of New England lore and the natural forms found along the coast of this area.



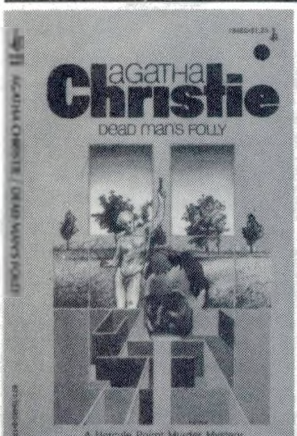
1974

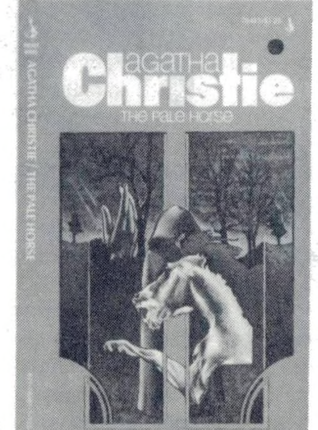
KEVIN BROOKS

Kevin Brooks has been a professional freelance illustrator for the past five years. At the age of 18, he became a professional musician and actor, while attending the Philadelphia College of Art. Co-hosting a weekly T.V. series "Tell It Like It Was," in Philadelphia, he illustrated on camera African and American folk stories as they were being narrated.

His first cover and interior art assignment upon graduating with a B.A., was for *Philadelphia Magazine.* Since moving to New York in 1972, his illustration work has appeared in such magazines as *Intellectual Digest* and *Penthouse.* Brooks also has done record covers for Nonesuch (Charles Ives) and Electra ("Muddy Waters," 1974), and has completed illustration work on a children's book, *Louis Armstrong* (T. W. Crowell, 1976). In 1973, his paintings for an article on Malcolm X for *Intellectual Digest* won the Ira Levy award and were displayed at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Although influenced by such artists as Peter Shannon and Roger Hane in acrylic styles of painting, his work is primarily in oils. Graphically striking and conceptually original, his Agatha Christie covers transcend purely commercial interests and attempt to express Brooks' philosophy of painting, which is to paint "gates of space through portraiture, decorative perspective and symbols pertaining to the concept of the piece."





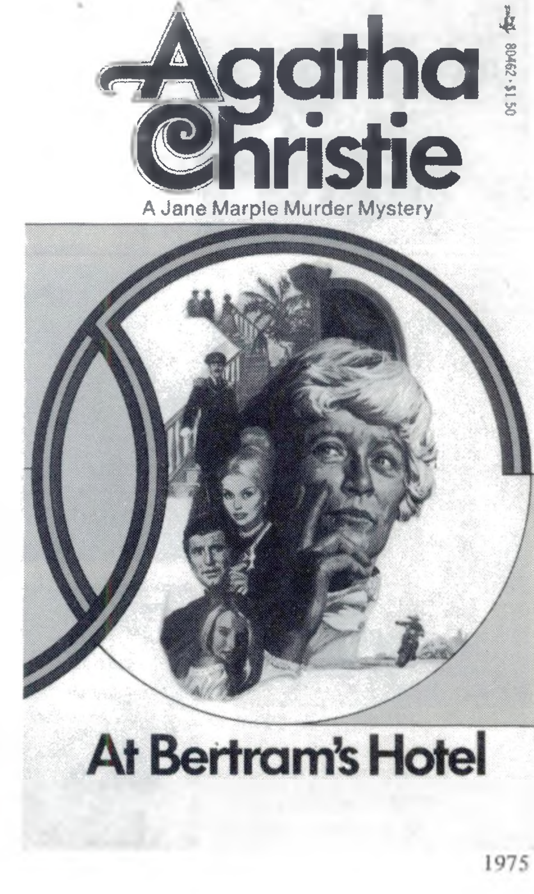
1974

ROBERT SCHULZ

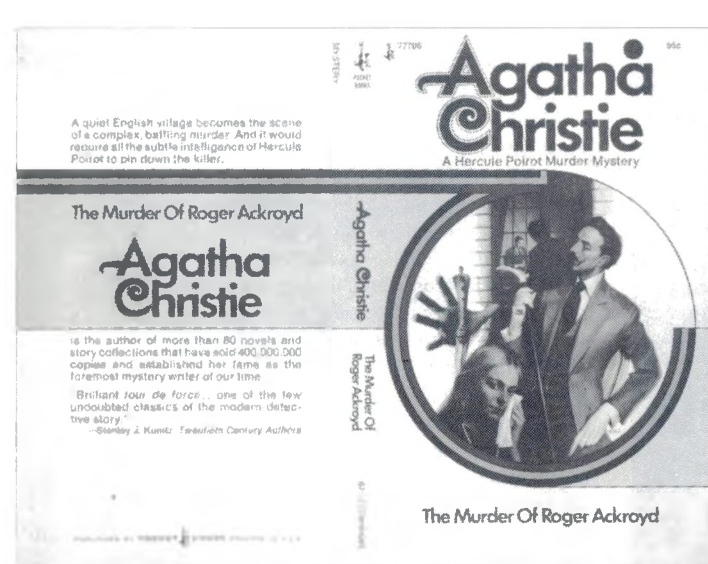
Robert Schulz has been a professional artist since 1952, when he graduated from art school. Well known as an illustrator for his work in magazines, advertising and paperbacks, his covers have run the gamut of mysteries, adventure, science fiction, westerns, and historical and romantic fiction.

For the past three years virtually every cover appearing on Zane Grey western paperbacks published by Pocket Books has been by Schulz. In 1975, Pocket Books issued an engagement calendar in tribute to his Zane Grey cover paintings. They are notable for their depiction of almost epic landscapes and an emphasis upon realism and naturalism. His cover paintings are all done in oils, rather than following current trends in media such as tempera, acrylic, and pushpin art. This realistic approach and the special quality of an oil painting also distinguish his Agatha Christie covers. Intended to attract a younger audience to her classic works, they feature younger figures in prominent positions and this emphasis on youth seems also to have been carried over in his portrayal of Jane Marple and Hercule Poirot.

Besides his illustration work, Schulz also teaches realistic painting and illustration at the Art Students League of New York. He has been the recipient of both the Allied Arts of America award in 1965 and the Huntington award in 1967 and has had an exhibition of his western art. Schulz includes in his list of credits his having survived an invitation to address "The Trap-Door Spider Society."



1975



1975

NEW GASLIGHT ON JACK THE RIPPER

by Albert I. Borowitz

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In China this year is observed as the Year of the Hare and each year in rotation will bring its new symbol. However, in some dark corner of the English psyche it is always the Year of the Ripper. It is forever the Fall of 1888 when in the space of ten weeks Jack the Ripper hunted down his victims in the dimly lighted recesses of Whitechapel in London's East End.

Although the English have never forgotten Jack the Ripper, he has really had a remarkable revival since 1970. In the past five years, there nave been a number of sensational claims to have established Jack the Ripper's identity. We have been told that Jack was none other than the Duke of Clarence. With equal assurance, another writer asserts that he was a boyfriend of the Duke of Clarence and a cousin of Virginia Woolf. Worst of all from the point of view of the profession to which I belong is a third theory that he was a crazy lawyer. Recently the BBC devoted a four-hour television series to the Jack the Ripper case and the principal suspects. And last fall when I was in London, the 86th anniversary of the famous crimes was marked by the premiere of a musical comedy, *Jack the Ripper*, presenting all of the favorite suspects but, I am glad to say, changing the crazy lawyer into a crazy evangelist.

Whenever newspaper articles or television programs feature the Jack the Ripper case, countless letters and telephone calls are received from Englishmen claiming descent from Jack the Ripper. Before we laugh at our English cousins, it is proper to note that a large number of Americans claiming membership in the Mayflower Society derive their descent from a passenger on that famous ship who was later hanged as one of America's first murderers.

Why is it that the Ripper case continues to hold such fascination for the English public and that after all these years so many journalists and writers are making serious or mock-serious efforts to unravel the secret of his identity?

Certainly murder itself held no great fascination for the 19th century residents of London's East End, for cries of murder or violence were common nocturnal experiences in that section. But the crimes of the Ripper were given some flavor of exoticism for England and the balance of Europe by their setting in a concentrated area of approximately one quarter mile of the East End. This part of London which lies to the east and north of the Tower of London was inhabited by immigrants from central and eastern Europe and was ordinarily visited infrequently by West Enders, who came to take a compulsive interest in the crime. The localization of the murders led to inescapable suggestions that the Ripper was either an inhabitant of the East End area or at least very familiar with its haunts and escape routes. Another terrifying aspect of the crimes was their concentration in time. The earliest murder attributed without dispute to Jack the Ripper took place on August 30, 1888 and his last crime took place on November 9. Another strange feature of these crimes was the fact that far from attempting to hide his murders the Ripper seemed (except in the last case) to take pains to commit them in open areas where the bodies were sure to be discovered early. Furthermore, he seemed to choose times when throngs of people would be about. The first four crimes were committed on weekends and were capped by the final murder of Mary Kelly on a holiday, the Lord Mayor's Day, when the East End was bound to be unusually crowded. Although a legend of fog is associated with the Ripper murders, the fact is that the nights of the crimes were clear and that on at least one occasion the Ripper escaped apprehension by a hair's breath and only because of his knowledge of the byways of the East End. Certainly the most sensational feature of the Ripper crimes was their mounting brutality, which culminated in the almost unparalleled mutilation of the last victim.

The English are very scholarly about their crimes, as they are about all things. And just as musicologists are very demanding in their acceptance or rejection of doubtful entries in the Mozart canon, so the English are very reluctant to admit doubtful crimes into the canon of Jack the Ripper. It is generally accepted that there are only five murders which bear the hand of the Ripper, even though these crimes were preceded and followed by other murders which have at least some resemblance to his undoubted deeds. The first victim of the Ripper was Mary Nichols, who was found in Bucks Row on August 31. Eight days later, Annie Chapman was found in a back yard at Hanbury Street, with even more severe mutilation.

On September 30 the so-called "double event" occurred. Elizabeth Stride was found outside a workmen's club at Berners Street. Only her throat had been cut and it seemed that the Ripper had been interrupted in his endeavors. Later that night he murdered Catherine Eddowes, whose body was found nearly in Mitre Square. Finally, on November 9, Mary Kelly was found in a room in Miller's Court. Hers was the only murder which the Ripper had committed indoors as if he had intended to cap his career with an uninterrupted blood orgy.

There was, of course, a link which tied the victims together. All of the murdered women were what the Victorians called "unfortunates" and what we in our franker vocabulary refer to as "prostitutes." The first four victims were clearly past their prime, but Mary Kelly was a young woman of considerable beauty. The brutality of the Ripper murders was of course decidedly un-English, and the London public believed that the culprit must be a foreigner.

The Ripper was not only more violent than the average Englishman, he was decidedly more energetic. One reader wrote to *The Times* that "the celerity with which the crimes were committed is inconsistent with the ordinary English phlegmatic nature." A rumor was spread that the criminal was a mysterious personage known as "Leather Apron," so named after an article of clothing which he was reported to have been seen wearing. Shortly after the second murder, a Polish Jew employed as a shoemaker, John Pizer, was captured under the suspicion of being Leather Apron. After searching his premises, the police took possession of five sharp long-handled knives which were used in Pizer's trade. He was soon freed, but there was sporadic anti-Semitic incidents in the East End. Other favorite suspects included sailors, butchers and any unfortunate persons found to be carrying black oil cloth bags which were for some reason associated with the Ripper. This formerly fashionable item soon dropped out of the marketplace.

The fears of the public were fed by the blundering of the police who were handling the criminal investigation. The comic highlight of the police effort was the employment of two bloodhounds, Barnaby and Burgho. After fruitless tracking of the criminal, the dogs finally gave up and escaped. An alert was now put out for Barnaby and Burgho and I am glad to report that the dogs were eventually found and returned to their kennel, the only successful capture made by the police in the Jack the Ripper case.

In view of the widespread public terror, it is not surprising that a number of eminent personages stepped forward to express their views on the identity of the Ripper and to offer their advice to the investigation. The most eminent of these amateurs was Queen Victoria herself. No doubt comparing her own idyllic married life with Jack the Ripper's ruder attitudes toward the female sex, the Queen decided early in the game that he could not be a married man. Moreover, despite the impeccable manners of Prince Albert, the Queen also assumed that the murderer was from the Continent. She put the following questions to her Home Secretary: "Have the cattle boats and passenger boats been examined? Has an investigation been made as to the number of single men occupying rooms to themselves? The murderer's clothes must be saturated with blood and kept somewhere. . . ." After the murder of Mary Kelly, she had the following hints for Scotland Yard: "All these courts must be lit, and our detectives improved."

The young George Bernard Shaw, who was then a music critic in London, gave a characteristically political twist to the case. He suggested that Jack the Ripper might be a rather splashy social reformer who had set out to expose the dismal living conditions in the East End:

> Whilst we conventional Social Democrats were wasting our time on education, agitation and organization, some independent genius has taken the matter in hand, and by simply murdering and disembowelling four women, converted the proprietary press to an inept sort of Communism.

Meantime, Jack the Ripper, showoff that he was, was engaging in his own correspondence. He mailed to a builder called George Lusk, the Chairman of the Whitechapel Vigilance Committee, a small cardboard box containing half a kidney which apparently had been removed from the body of Catherine Eddowes. It was addressed "from Hell" and was signed "Catch me when you can, Mr. Lusk." Other letters received by the police were of more doubtful authenticity, including the following verse: "I'm not a butcher, I'm not a Yid, nor yet a foreign skipper, but I'm your own light-hearted friend. Yours truly, Jack the Ripper." There was also a variant of Ten Little Indians which began "Eight little whores, with no hope of heaven, Gladstone may save one, then there'll be seven."

Where Queen Victoria and Bernard Shaw led hundreds have followed. The gallery of suspects is now overcrowded, and I will introduce only the leading figures among them.

From the very beginning there was considerable suspicion that Jack the Ripper belonged to the medical profession. Some observers claimed that his mutilations of his victims showed some anatomical skill. However, the modern forensic pathologist Francis Camps writes that "any surgeon who operated in this manner would have been struck off the Medical Register." Nevertheless, the first modern work on the Ripper case, written by Leonard Matters in 1928, identifies Jack the Ripper as a London doctor to whom Matters gave the fictitious name Stanley. According to Matters, he had learned from a conversation with an anonymous surgeon in Buenos Aires that Jack the Ripper was a doctor whose son had died from syphilis contracted from an East End prostitute. According to Matters' informant, this prostitute was Mary Kelly and the earlier victims of the Ripper had been struck down in the course of his search for this guilty girl.

In view of the continuing struggle for the ERA, I am glad to say that there is a female counterpart to the Dr. Stanley theory, namely that Jack the Ripper was a woman. The English call her Jill the Ripper, but being a nativist at heart, I prefer to call her Jackie. One variant of this theory is that Jackie was a midwife who botched an abortion and committed a series of similar murders to cover up her malpractice. The difficulty with this theory is that only the final Ripper victim, Mary Kelly, was found to be pregnant. Another version of the midwife theory is that Jackie had been sent to prison as a result of testimony of East End prostitutes and had emerged with a hostility towards the entire profession.

By far the most exotic theory is Donald McCormick's proposition that Jack the Ripper was a Czarist secret agent who was hired by the Russian Secret Service to commit the crimes for the purpose of showing up the inefficiency of the English police. McCormick bases his theory on the supposed discovery of a French manuscript left by Rasputin at his death on the subject of great Russian criminals. The monk's loyal daughter, Miss Rasputin, challenges this theory by denying that her father, however bad his reputation, ever committed the ultimate crime of writing in French.

Students of the subsequent history of English crime have offered us as alternate suspects a pair of poisoners, Neill Cream and George Chapman. It is true that Neill Cream displayed one of the Ripper's strange characteristics, namely compulsive letter writing to the police. And, indeed, he is reputed to have said just as he was about to be hanged, "I am Jack the ____" Unfortunately, however, Cream was in prison at Joliet, Illinois at the time of the Ripper murders. This presents no problem for Donald Bell, the most recent exponent of the Cream theory. Mr. Bell, impressed no doubt by the history of some recent elections in Cook County, surmises that Cream actually won his freedom earlier and bribed the prison authorities to falsify the records.

The second of the poisoner suspects was Severin Klosowski, later known as George Chapman when he was convicted and hanged for arsenic poisoning in the early years of the twentieth century. One of the principal bases for the suspicion of Klosowski was that he arrived in London by ship shortly before the Ripper murders. However, it has been pointed out that if someone is to be accused of the Ripper murders merely because he was a new arrival on the scene, the millions of Londoners who were already there could be accused with equal persuasion.

Even the Salvation Army has not been devoid of suspects. General Booth, head of the Salvation Army, had doubts about his secretary, who, according to the General, had "dreams of blood." I have never taken this story seriously since I do not believe that the good people of the Salvation Army have homicidal impulses, but just to cover all bets I generally give $.50 to the Salvation Army member who solicits outside the State liquor store in my neighborhood.

The noblest suspect of them all is the Duke of Clarence, Queen Victoria's grandson and heir to the throne of England at the time of his death in 1892. This suggestion was first published in 1970 in an article in the English crime magazine, *The Criminologist*, by an elderly surgeon, Thomas Stowell. Although Dr. Stowell was careful to refer to his suspect as "S," his description of the suspect was clearly a reference to the Duke of Clarence. He alluded to the suspect's nickname, "Collars and Cuffs," given to him because of his extravagant clothing, and mentioned a photograph of "S" showing a 4 to 4½ inch starched collar and 2 inches of shirt cuff at each wrist. Dr. Stowell reports that the aristocratic suspect took a cruise with "high spirited boys," one of whom seduced the Duke and gave him the syphilis of which he died at age 28. Stowell outlined his suspect's army career which began at age 21 and ended with his resignation at 24 after a raid on a male brothel in Cleveland Street, off Tottenham Court Road. Earlier this year *The New York Times*, stretching its idea of what is fit to print, reported the disclosure of English court records identifying the Duke of Clarence as one of the habitues of the Cleveland Street brothel. All of this makes very titillating reading but the whole theory crumbles against the unyielding fact that the Duke was in Scotland during the murder of Catherine Eddowes and was in Sandringham when Mary Kelly was murdered.

Dr. Stowell did not survive to stand cross examination. He died shortly after the publication of his notorious article, and his son burned all of his father's records.

Dr. Stowell claimed to have based his revelations on the private papers of the late Sir William Gull, physician to Guy's Hospital and physician in ordinary to the Royal Family. The Duke of Clarence's recent biographer, Michael Harrison, does not dispute Dr. Stowell's claim to have had access to such papers but believes that he misunderstood the reference to the mysterious "S." Harrison argues that "S" was not the Duke of Clarence but a boyfriend of the Duke of Clarence, and a cousin of Virginia Woolf, James Stephen. From now on if anyone asks me, "Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf?" my answer will be: "Nobody, but I'm scared to death of her cousin."

We arrive at last at one of the most fashionable of current theories, advanced by the journalist Daniel Farson, that Jack the Ripper was a crazy lawyer named Montague Druitt who drowned himself in the Thames at the end of 1888. As early as 1899, a history of crime written by Major Arthur Griffiths stated that one of Scotland Yard's three principal suspects was a young doctor who had drowned himself shortly after the murder of Mary Kelly. Farson presented a television program on Jack the Ripper in 1959. One of the responses he received was a letter from Australia from a Mr. Knowles concerning a document Knowles had seen in Australia called "The East End Murderer—I Knew Him" by Lionel Druitt. Later Farson was given access to the notes of Sir Melville Macnaghten, who joined Scotland Yard as Assistant Chief Constable in 1889 and became head of the C.I.D. in 1903. Macnaghten indicated that one of the principal suspects was M. J. Druitt, a doctor of about 41 years of age and of fairly good family, whose body was found floating in the Thames on December 3, 1888. Farson's research revealed that Druitt was in fact a barrister who was related to two London physicians of the same name. Unfortunately, Farson's dossier containing his letter from Mr. Knowles and his other researches on Druitt vanished from Television House in London. By now, I am sure you are beginning to gather that anonymous conversations and missing records are hallmarks of Ripper research. Farson claims to have substantiated some of the details of Knowles' letter by on-the-spot inquiries in Australia, but the document "The East End Murderer—I Knew Him" has never turned up. In the meantime, neither I nor the American Bar Association will concede that Jack the Ripper was a lawyer.

The contemporary prejudices against Jews and butchers appears to survive in the theory of Robin Odell that Jack the Ripper was a Jewish Orthodox butcher. To this intriguing suspect I have given the name Jake the Ripper, since his adoption of the public nickname Jack was presumably an assimilationist gesture. Odell explains that an Orthodox butcher would have had community standing similar to a

Continued on page 234

OUR HEROES IN MOTLEY

By Edward Lauterbach

I have become interested in what I call "crime gags," or possibly "criminous facetiae." There appear to be at least three types of these jokes with the possibility of combining the forms: (1) the short anecdote; (2) the pun; (3) the twisted epigram. Perhaps, depending on how these are classified, types two and three are really the same because the epigrammatical saying is often twisted with a pun. I called attention (TAD VII, page 147) to an anecdote about Sherlock Holmes found on page 36 of the 1940 novel by Caryl Brahms and S. J. Simon, titled *Don't Mr. Disraeli!* I make no apology for repeating this anecdote:

> Outside 221B Baker Street a haggard little man was supervising the loading of all his worldly goods on to a growler.
> "Moving?" asked Doctor Watson, chancing along just then.
> "It's that detective," said the little man passionately. "Can't stand this blasted violin any longer."[1]

Surely everyone knows the famous statement by E. W. Hornung found in *The Misadventures of Sherlock Holmes,* edited by Ellery Queen (1944), page [1]:

> Though he might be more humble, there's no police like Holmes.

Less well known is the following from Ward Morley's *Toasts, Roasts and Funny Stories* (1926), page 18:

> "Quick,Watson, the needle!" And Sherlock Holmes slowly wound up the Victrola.

Another joke about Holmes is recorded by Vincent Starrett in *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes,* revised and enlarged edition (1960), page 120:

> "Ah, my dear Watson! I see that you have put on your winter underwear."
> "Marvelous, Holmes! But how did you deduce it?"
> "Elementary, my dear fellow. You have forgotten to put on your trousers!"

Starrett states that this joke "once appeared in several newspapers." He also repeats the anecdote of "Holmes and a troubled old woman," which Starrett says is "still current":

> "I am greatly puzzled, Sir," she tells him. "In one week I have lost a motor horn, a brush, a box of golf balls, a dictionary, and a bootjack. Can you explain it?"
> "Nothing simpler, Madam," replies the detective. "It is clear that your neighbor keeps a goat."

Starrett feels that these last two jokes about Holmes are crude, and I agree. As he says, they are ". . . specimens of newspaper humor . . . typical of the sort of burlesque perennially inspired by the Holmes-Watson relationship."

In the late 1930's and 1940's small boys (and I was among them) thought it was the height of sophisticated wit to say:

> Many men smoke, but Fu Manchu!

Another bit of humor we derived from the Oriental villain-hero was:

> Fu Manchu's chain of command is only as strong as his weakest chink!

This, or a variant of it, is attributed to the motion picture actor Henry Brandon who played the insidious devil doctor in the 1940 Republic serial *Drums of Fu Manchu.* Brandon tells how he originated this twisted epigram during the filming of the serial: "The Confucious sayings were all the rage at that time, and the cast and crew came to expect a new variation on the theme, Fu Manchu Say, every day. My biggest laugh was: 'Fu Manchu say . . . Chinese chain only as strong as its weakest chink' " (*Those Enduring Matinee Idols,* December, 1972, page 292). Obviously the original had been altered somewhat by the time the kids in my neighbourhood began repeating it.

Recently, as I read G. M. Snodgress's *The Crestwood Traps* (1974), I found the book unexpectedly enlivened on page 101. Private investigator Dr. John McFallon and his assistant, Pete, search the room of a prostitute who has had her neck severed to the spine. McFallon asks Pete for a penknife:

> Pete brought McFallon the knife and watched him open an obscure drawer in the nightstand.
> "What do you expect to find?" [asked Pete].
> "Who knows what evil lurks in a girl's drawers. . . ."

Variants of The Shadow's ominous question, "Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men?," popular among boys of the late 1930's and 1940's were the following: (1) "Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of jerks?" This one sometimes changed with what was supposed to be a funny Brooklyn accent to (2) "Who knows what evil loiks in the hoits of joiks?" There was also (3) "Who knows what evil lurks in boll weevil?" Somehow these lack the polish of G. M. Snodgress's sinister "drawers," and I offer them here only to record different versions which, at the time, seemed hilarious to youngsters.

In each of these examples, the idiosyncracies of Sherlock Holmes, Fu Manchu and The Shadow are so widely known that they have practically become part of the folklore of mystery and detective fiction. The jokes hinge on the lives and actions of the three famous characters or on an epigrammatic statement associated with them. And since some of these jokes were transmitted orally, they may be classified as a type of folk humor. It is fascinating to see how a written, literary form like the detective-mystery story is adapted to oral humor. These jokes based on characters in detective and mystery fiction offer a curious intermingling of literary and folkloristic forms, and are particularly interesting for reversing the usual transition from oral to written form. At least one of the examples given for each of the three characters shows a progression with variation and change, and this is exactly what the folklore process entails: alteration and/or accretion.

The example from Ward Morley's *Toasts*, concerning Sherlock Holmes, the needle and the Victrola, is especially noteworthy in showing alteration and the accumulation of detail as the change is made from detective fiction to a form of humorous folklore because the steps in this process can be fairly closely dated. Conan Doyle created the character of Sherlock Holmes in 1887 with the publication of *A Study in Scarlet.* Specific references to Holmes' use of drugs, usually to combat boredom and to stimulate his thinking processes, occur in *The Sign of the Four*, "A Scandal in Bohemia," "The Yellow Face," and "The Adventure of the Missing Three-Quarter."

Nowhere in the Sherlock Holmes stories can the expression "Quick, Watson, the needle!" be found. However, though Conan Doyle never wrote those words, they became attached to the Great Detective. The words conjure up a picture of Holmes' during predilection for drugs, and there is something ominous and dangerous in the phrase. No Sherlockian scholar seems to know exactly where "Quick, Watson, the needle!" originated. Edgar W. Smith, in a headnote to an article by George F. McCleary, M.D. ("Was Sherlock Holmes a Drug Addict?," published in *Profile by Gaslight*, 1944, page 40), states: "The greatest calumny upon the name of Sherlock Holmes is the noxious phrase 'Quick, Watson, the needle!' attributed to him by the uninitiate. This vulgarism . . . has unfortunately gained a widespread and irreverent currency." In his *Private Life*, page 122, Vincent Starrett speculates that the phrase developed among actors and in newspaper cartoons: "Most notorious of the lines put into circulation by the actors, perhaps, is the familiar gag, 'Quick, Watson, the needle!' Precisely where it originated is still a mystery; but it appeared about the turn of the century in the wake of Gillette's melodrama, which inspired dozens of Holmes-Watson burlesques. Montgomery and Stone may have used it in *The Red Mill*, and undoubtedly T. A. Dorgan spread it across the nation in his sports cartoons in the Hearst newspapers."[2] In this respect, the "Quick, Watson . . . ." line may be similar in origin to Henry Brandon's Fu Manchu joke, as having been created by, and first used by, actors.

William Gillette's *Sherlock Holmes* was presented first in New York in November, 1899, and appeared in London in 1901. With Gillette often performing the role of Holmes, the play continued to be popular during the first third of the twentieth century (with an extremely well-received revival long after Gillette's death during the mid-1970's). But nowhere in the play does the needle phrase appear. Curiously, and probably by coincidence, a variant of "Quick, Watson. . . ." occurs in the literary dialect parody "Sherlock Holmes" by Peter Finley Dunne, one of the humorous pieces in *Observations by Mr. Dooley*, published in 1902. Mr. Dooley was an irrepressible Irishman who gave his opinion about "irvything and irvybody" in many books by Dunne at the turn of the century. On page 25 of the *Observations*, Mr. Dooley, who envisions himself as the Great Detective for his friend Hennessy, says "Pass th' dope, Watson." Surely this echoes the more striking "Quick, Watson, the needle!," and it shows that such phrases were commonly connected with Sherlock Holmes in the early 1900's.

Ward Morley next records a variant of the "Quick, Watson. . . ." phrase in *Toasts*, dated 1926, with an addition that deflates the sinister qualities of "Quick, Watson, the needle!" For those who are less than forty years old and never have had the fun of playing one of those wondrous machines, a Victola was a phonograph that one wound up with a handle. The turntable was moved by a large spring that uncoiled. The needles were tiny, sharply pointed, removable steel pegs, though on occasion cactus wood needles were used, carefully inserted and tightened by a thumb screw in the arm of the record player. Incidentally, the image of Sherlock Holmes winding an old-fashioned record player is very appropriate since Holmes used one to trap the jewel thief Count Negretto Sylvius in "The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone" (1921). Holmes pretends to play his violin but what the Count hears is actually music from a record while Holmes listens secretly to the Count revealing the hiding place of the famous jewel. As Holmes says, " 'These modern gramaphones are a remarkable invention.' " Though Ward Morley does not indicate the source of his Victrola addition to the Holmesian needle phrase, the purpose of his collection, *Toasts. . . and Funny Stories*, is to provide material for speakers at meetings, luncheons, banquets and similar occasions—oral presentations. Anyone hearing the Victrola line at a gathering, and liking it, would be likely to repeat it later to friends—again oral transmission.

The more usual form of accretion around folklore heroes is from oral to written tradition. For example, ballads about Robin Hood existed long before they were committed to paper. But in the case of Sherlock Holmes, Fu Manchu and The Shadow the process has been reversed, the written story coming first, then jokes based on the peculiar characteristics of these heroes spread by oral retelling. Such oral transmission indicates how widely the modern mystery and detective story pervades the culture of English-speaking peoples.

NOTES:

[1]Frank D. McSherry, Jr., notes a variant of this story in TAD VI, page 125.

[2]Frederic Dorr Steele, "Reminiscent Notes," in *Sherlock Holmes: A Play* . . . by William Gillette, ed. by Vincent Starrett (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1935), page xxviii, also notes that ". . . Montgomery and Stone did a Holmes and Watson scene in *The Red Mill*," and that the vaudevillians Weber and Fields burlesqued Holmes. If scripts of these Holmes routines still exist, it would be possible to check the provenance of the phrase in the acts of these comedians.

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(1861-1937): A Forgotten American Mystery Writer

By Wendell Hertig Taylor

That the practice of medicine may be combined with the production of crime fiction is well-known—the cases of Bell, Doyle, Eustace, Freeman and others come readily to mind. But the dental profession has rarely got its teeth into the problem of extracting evidence for the benefit of the mystery-lover. In the United States, where the quality of dental technology is acknowledged to be supreme, it is fitting that there should have been a pioneer in the twin fields of crime-writing and dentistry. The interesting contributions of Rodrigues Ottolengui, M.D.S. are now almost completely forgotten and it is the prupose of this essay to make amends.

Ottolengui was born in Charleston, S.C. His father was a playwright and newspaperman. One cousin was dentist to King Alfonso of Spain, another was Octavus Roy Cohen. Coming to New York City, Ottolengui practiced dentistry there for forty years and was a pioneer in the use of X-rays. Other interests included taxidermy, entomology and photography. He published a substantial dental textbook and for many years edited the journal *Dental Items of Interest.*

Our interest lies chiefly in the four mystery novels and one set of short stories which Ottolengui published between 1892 and 1898. Most of these feature the activities of John Barnes, a professional private detective, and his friend the wealthy amateur Robert Leroy Mitchel. Some comments on each of these works follow.

An Artist in Crime (Putnam, 1892) tells of the first meeting between detective John ("Jack") Barnes and Robert Leroy Mitchel, here described as a man of 45. In an adjacent section of a Pullman sleeper on the midnight Boston-New York train, Barnes overhears Mitchel's wager of $1000 that within a year he will commit a crime and avoid detection. A crime (jewel robbery) is committed on the train and Barnes is retained to investigate. But had Mitchel a well-known collector of gems anything to do with this? Barnes' activities make an entertaining tale, perhaps a bit long drawn out. Mitchel gains a wife and also wins his wager.

A Conflict of Evidence (Putnam, 1893) tells how John Barnes got his start as a detective, moving from Boston to New York and his own agency after elucidating a murder involving two families in a small New Hampshire town. The family feud seems a bit dated today and one wonders if a reader in 1893 would fall for the suspiciously disfigured corpse. The action is all long before the advent of Leroy Mitchel.

A Modern Wizard (Putnam, 1894) is Ottolengui's most ambitious book. It must be judged a failure, though the first part of the long novel is a very readable account of the trial for murder of Dr. Emanuel Medjora, ably defended by young lawyers Dudley and Bliss. Neither Barnes nor Mitchel appears. There is good scientific evidence regarding cause of death (diphtheria or morphine poisoning?) and some excellent speech-making. In the longer second part, things go badly to pieces: hypnotism, insanity and bacteriology are badly scrambled and Dr. Medjora remains an unconvincing "wizard."

The Crime of the Century (Putnam, 1896) presents both Barnes and Mitchel. In this long tale, which would profit by cutting, Leroy Mitchel defends his theories about criminals (e.g., that punishing them is no cure for crime). Much of the plot, complete with an abandoned infant and a band of gentlemanly crooks, now seems dated, but the author's attention to evidential detail is admirable.

Final Proof, or The Value of Evidence (Putnam, 1898) is a strange mixture, but it contains Ottolengui's most original contributions to scientific detection. A prefatory note signed R.O. tells us that the cases here narrated took place between that of *An Artist in Crime* and *The Crime of the Century.* The first of the twelve stories in the volume is much the best and by far the longest, running to 132 pages. "The Phoenix of Crime" is in fact a novella, and it certainly deserves to be reprinted. The problem, tackled independently by Barnes and Mitchel, is how a corpse, thought to have been cremated, can turn up in the East River, and pass numerous tests of identification as the cremated man. Ashes in the coffin suggest a substitution of bodies, and Mitchel does a masterly job of establishing the identity of the one actually cremated. The use of a dental chart (reproduced in the book) is certainly strikingly original for those pre-Thorndyke days. And the author deserves much credit for his success in providing adequate motivation in what at first seems a bizarre situation. Of the remaining eleven stories it is unnecessary to write in detail. All are quite short (18 to 30 pages) and range from one that is pure science-fantasy ("The Missing Link") through several that are interlinked and revolve about Mitchel's love of jewels and a couple in which Barnes has a solo part and shows real detective skill ("The Nameless Man"; "A Singular Abduction") to several with good by-play between Barnes and Mitchel. Of these "A Frosty Morning," which involves the vanishing of a £1000 banknote, makes clever use of a recording thermometer and was originally published in *Black Cat* magazine. And in "A Shadow of Proof" Mitchel becomes one of the first detectives to use X-rays to spot a gold object swallowed by a culprit. Agreeable writing and good psychology and characterization suggest that some, at least, of these stories should be made available to present-day readers.

MR. & MRS. NORTH

By R. Jeff Banks

Pam(ela) and Jerry (Gerald) North were born in 1932 in *The New Yorker* in one of what had already become a fairly lengthy series of "casual" anecdotal sketches by Richard Lockridge. The author was then, and for many years after, drama critic to the New York *Sun*; deciding to make one of the 1932 anecdotes from autobiographical materials, he fictionized himself and wife Frances as "Mr. & Mrs. North," taking the surname from the traditional third-bidding position in bridge problems. Many, perhaps all, of the early stories about the Norths had bridge game backgrounds. Lockridge's first book, *Mr. & Mrs. North* (Stokes, 1936) collected most of the published stories, which had quickly become popular with the readers of *The New Yorker*. Still, the Norths lacked Christian names and detailed backgrounds.

Four years later they reappeared, finally christened and he a successful if minor book publisher, in a first novel, *The Norths Meet Murder*. Mrs. Lockridge shared the by-line—in later years they said she always worked out the plots, while Mr. Lockridge did the actual writing. This book introduced, as the chief "friendly cop," Lt. William (Bill) Weigand, who was to have a part in all but one of their 25 later adventures as well as solving one mystery (*The Tangled Cord*, Lippincott, 1957) without their help; Sgt. Aloysius Mullins, his almost omnipresent assistant, who could be depended upon to remark that whenever the Norths were involved a case would inevitably be "screwy"; Deputy Chief Inspector Artemus (Arty, but *never* that to his face) O'Malley, the chief "unfriendly cop," whose role was gradually expanded, but except in *The Long Skeleton* (Lippincott, 1958) never loomed very large; and various other police and civilian characters who were to appear again from time to time.

Inspiration for turning what had been a highly successful short story series into a detective novel, and eventually into the most successful series of novels in its highly specialized subgenre (the Husband and Wife Team), derived ultimately from Hammett's brilliant last novel, *The Thin Man* (Knopf, 1933). More directly, inspiration came from the almost equally brilliant Thin Man movie series, whose third episode, *Another Thin Man*, was released by MGM about the time the Lockridges began work on *The Norths Meet Murder*. Early success of the new venture resulted in the issuance of two new Mr. & Mrs. North novels, *A Pinch of Poison* and *Murder Out of Turn* (both Stokes), release of a movie adaptation of the first book (as *Mr. & Mrs. North*, starring William Post, Jr. and Gracie Allen in the title roles), a fifth printing of *The Norths Meet Murder* by Stokes, issuance of a cheap hardbound reprint by Grossett & Dunlap, and a paperback reprint (Pocketbook No. 166), all in 1941.

Murder Out of Turn is significant for its introduction of two other prominent Lockridge characters. The setting was the Norths' vacation home in upstate New York, and Capt. Milton Heimrich (featured in at least 17 later collaborations and five authored by Richard Lockridge alone, during which he gradually rose to the rank of Inspector) was nominally in charge of the investigation. Actually the Norths and Weigand, who was their weekend guest when the first two murders occurred, solved the crime. Heimrich appeared again to investigate the secondary murder in *Death of a Tall Man* (Lippincott, 1946), the tenth North book. Dorian Hunter, erstwhile suspect and almost final victim, was a fashion artist friend of the Norths who had no love for the police. But by the end of the book she and Bill Weigand were in love; by *Death Takes a Bow* (Lippincott, 1943) they were married, remaining so throughout the series as he rose to the rank of captain. Were Lockridge still writing about Weigand one supposes he too would be an inspector by now, but Mullins would still be affectionately addressing him as "Loot."

Several of the novels predictably made use of Lockridge's theatrical background. These include the fourth in the series, *Death on the Aisle* (1942), the one with which Lippincott became the Lockridges' publisher; *Curtain for a Jester* (No. 17, 1953); and *Death of an Angel* (No. 20, 1955), which was shortly reissued by Avon as *Mr. & Mrs. North and the Poisoned Playboy*. One which did not, although its title might suggest it, was *Death Takes a Bow* (No. 6). Like *The Long Skeleton* (No. 22, 1958), and the last book in the series, *Murder by the Book* (No. 26, 1963), which was also the fiftieth Lockridge book, *Death Takes a Bow* related to Mr. North's background (book publishing). Authors associated with North Books (or its forerunner firm, Townsend Bros.) are involved in murder either as victims or suspects, thus justifying his (and Pam's) involvement; this is an important consideration, as Jerry is almost as vehemently determined to avoid such involvement (a determination his wife invariably and necessarily overcomes) as Arty O'Malley is to keep them out of Weigand's cases.

Ways of getting them involved, opposition from whatever quarter notwithstanding, varied and demonstrated a great deal of clever originality in Mrs. Lockridge's plots. One of the Norths (usually Pam) might discover the first, or subsequent, victim's body, as happened in at least three of the books already mentioned, and others; murder might interrupt their vacation, as in *Murder Out of Turn* and *Voyage Into Violence* (No. 21, 1956); they might be called in by a suspect, as in *Payoff for the Banker* (No. 8, 1945); Pam might simply follow Lt. Weigand's car to the scene of a crime, as she did at the beginning of *Death of a Tall Man*; or one or both of them might coincidentally be at or near the scene of the crime on other business, as in *Death Takes a Bow*, *Death of an Angel* and several others.

The mysteries were usually difficult enough to provide the reader a puzzling workout, with a satisfying number of False Leads and Wrong Suspects. Except for too strong a tendency to avoid female villains Mrs. Lockridge's woman's touch, though there was one interesting exception—which resulted in most of the murderers turning out

to be unattractive middle-aged males, the solutions were hard to predict. Good examples of the mystery-monger's art.

However, it is the humor that makes the books most memorable. Reviewers always commented (almost always favorably) upon it. It was of the type one associates with *The New Yorker*, earning a smile far more often than a laugh. Pam's tendency to verbal shorthand, Jerry's tendency mentally to "build-up" difficult situations he found himself in beyond anything resembling proportion, and the antics of their ever-present cats (of which more later) these were the main sources of humor. But some scenes, not always stopping completely this side of slapstick, leap out on second reading. Bill Weigand's chagrin when he and his wife are sapped in their own apartment in *Death Takes a Bow*; Pam's presumptions of imminent bankruptcy and her fear of flying in *The Long Skeleton*; Jerry's disquisition on exercise and the invigorating sea air in *Voyage Into Violence*, and his gradual subsidence into lethargy; the Norths' first encounter with Weigand in *The Norths Meet Murder* these are among the scenes that will easily bear multiple readings. Such touches as the precocious nieces who are continuously picking up sailors and "putting down" "Uncle Jerry" in *Death Takes a Bow*, the book that stands out as the one where the most vigorous efforts to be funny were made, flatten through repetition.

Over half the books were reprinted in paperbacks, at least eleven of them by Avon (mid-Forties to mid-Fifties), four (and probably more) by Pocket Books by 1948, *Death of a Tall Man* by Dell (one of the few in which the "map-back" was really useful, No. 322), surely more than *Murder Out of Turn* in the Mercury Mystery series (where it was number 77), and more recently two by Pyramid *The Long Skeleton* and *Voyage Into Violence*--both in the Green Door Mystery series in the early 1960's. None is in print currently in either soft or hard covers, perhaps symptomatic of the thoroughness with which Lockridge abandoned the series after Frances' death, but well-stocked libraries and used book stores can yield up reading copies aplenty on rather short notice.

Miscellaneous notes in closing:

The series began with Pete, an aging tom who had clawed his way in and out of laps in *The New Yorker* stories, as the Norths' cat. He was replaced by a frisky brother and sister act, Toughy and Ruffy, by the time of *Death Takes a Bow*; they soon gave way to Martini (usually called Teeny). After her frisky days were past, she produced two offspring, Gin and Sherry. The latter was often called Limpet, for the way she clung to laps. Eventually the two younger cats disappeared and Teeny had the Norths and their friends all to herself again.

The Norths were originally visualized, according to Lockridge's reminiscences in 1941, as being "in their thirties." Like Shell Scott, Dick Tracy and Little Orphan Annie, they remained unaging for more than thirty years. However, there were lapses. Jerry was identified as having been a sailor in World War I and too old for the service (though he tried to enlist) in World War II (*Death Takes a Bow*), which would have made him close to fifty by that time.

Gracie Allen notwithstanding, there was only one *Mr. & Mrs. North* movie, although the identification of Pam with Gracie lingered on to the last days of the series in books—at least in the minds and words of reviewers. A play, *Mr. & Mrs. North*, is probably also a dramatization of the first novel. The Norths ran three years on TV, starting on CBS (1952-53), moving to NBC after a one-year lapse, and finishing up in syndication (1955-56); Barbara Britton was Pam, Richard Denning was Jerry. They might have lasted longer had not NBC bought *The Thin Man* with Peter Lawford and Phyllis Kirk for 1957-58, giving rise to the (probably justified) feeling that one zany husband and wife team was all the detective viewing fans would watch. (It is probably this same feeling, engendered by *MacMillan & Wife's* continued success, that prevented development of the Craig Stevens-Joanne Pflug *Thin Man* as a TV series in 1975.) On radio, their half hours ushered on and off to the perfect theme music, "The Way You Look Tonight." Pam (Alice Frost) and Jerry (Joseph Curtin) were almost as successful as in books. They did very well against the competition of the radio *Thin Man* (Les Damon, *et al.* as Nick Charles, and Claudia Morgan, as wife Nora) for many years. In fact, Curtin was one of the last radio actors to portray Nick Charles.

G. K. CHESTERTON'S FATHER BROWN*

By Robert A. W. Lowndes

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Not having read everything, I dare not assert that G. K. Chesterton's detective, Father Brown, is unique in the annals of mystery fiction. I can only say with confidence that I have never read about the exploits of another fictional detective who even remotely resembles him. How he came into being is more certainly unique in the annals of the generation and birth of fictional detectives.

On a particular occasion prior to 1910, Chesterton met a curate of the Roman Catholic Church, Father John O'Connor, and the two took an instant liking to each other, although the author was not a Roman Catholic at the time (and would not become one until 1922). At a later meeting, Chesterton mentioned to Father (later Monsignor) O'Connor that he proposed to write in support of a particular proposition relating to some of the more unsavory aspects of vice and crime. Fr. O'Connor considered his new friend's views in error. "He told me certain facts he knew about perverted practices," Chesterton relates. "I did not imagine that the world could contain such horrors."

Hard upon this experience, the two men encountered some Cambridge undergraduates who were talking with naive learnedness about the deplorable ignorance of the realities of life on the part of priests and religious people who were cloistered comfortably away from the actual facts and events of life. Those two incidents—the revelation of matters unknown to a man who considered himself sophisticated in the ways of the world from a source he had heretofore imagined as ignorant of them, and a prime example of youthful ignorance proclaiming itself with cocksure arrogance—fertilized the egg which would hatch the most bizarre detective that I have encountered in mystery fiction.

"Has it not struck you," Father Brown says to Flambeau in "The Blue Cross," "that a man who does next to nothing but hear man's real sins is not likely to be wholly aware of human evil?" Thus we have the ground rules, as it were, upon which the series is written. Father Brown always looks like the "simple-minded, superstitious" country priest, and the various other persons in the stories voice the customary misimpressions of priests, Catholicism, Christianity as relating to the teachings of its Founder, etc., invariably revealing themselves unable to see what is plainly before their eyes.

I doubt if there ever was, or ever will be, a real Roman Catholic priest quite like him, although I should not be surprised to find a real priest with a comparable knowledge of contemporary criminal tactics and universal vice and perversion derived from hearing confessions. (Oddly, Fr. Brown never, to my recollection, refers to books as a source for such knowledge. I should imagine that a real priest would draw upon both, were he to attempt detective work.) But in some ways he is too large for life and in others too small. In fact, he is barely characterized at all. I have re-read all of the stories, and while I am well aware of Fr. Brown's convictions on a wide variety of subjects, I find that I know less about him as an individual (as opposed to the *kind* of person he is) than I do about the Chevalier Dupin from the three stories by Poe.

the first Father Brown

His method is unique. He sees the Truth about the crimes that come to his attention through a sort of spiritual exercise in which he puts himself into the spiritual condition of the criminal. Thus he knows how the crime was done, why, and by whom. That is explained in reasonable detail—it's not as simple-minded as it sounds—in "The Secret of Father Brown" and "The Secret of Flambeau," in which he seeks to show that there is nothing occult or supernatural about him and his manner of detecting. Whether anyone alive (even a real priest with Fr. Brown's fund of information) could actually do the same with anything like Brown's record of success is at best unsettled. We'll just have to suspend disbelief, if we find the stories worth the effort.

The entire series is, in one way, all of a piece: all were written according to the basic rule; everything else in the paraphernalia of detective fiction is considered expendable. In one story, the mystery is solved but we do not learn the name of the culprit ("The Curse of the Golden Cross"); in another, we do not know whether the culprit is ever caught or not ("The Actor and the Alibi"); in another, the solution reveals a public deception, but so far as we know, it is never exposed ("The Duel of Dr. Hirsch"); in still another, the truth about a famous historical character is brought to light by Father Brown, who decides that, since no one was unjustly blamed in the official account, nothing is to be gained by broadcasting the actual facts. Let a dead scoundrel be considered a great hero and an inspiration to young and old, for the evil that he has done died with him, so far as the general public is concerned. Once the mystery has been solved, Father Brown often has no further interest in the case, and certainly no interest in police and court work.

The ground rule is that he must be discounted as unworthy of attention or even notice by most of the

others—certainly by the transients. (In any story we may encounter someone who has had previous experience with Fr. Brown and thus does not discount him.) The purpose of all that, however, is not to inject Roman Catholic propaganda (most of Fr. Brown's discourses amount to plain common sense about human nature and human behavior, so plain as to be highly uncommon), but rather to delight and baffle the reader with an essentially simple mystery that appears to be complex—and often positively supernatural - because the others in the story are so easily taken in by popular misconceptions and superstitions, as well as custom. You will nearly always find some sort of moral comment, but not put forth offensively; and again, it nearly always breaks down to common sense, or matters with which you may find yourself in agreement.

For example, the "moral" of "The Invisible Man" can be stated as "everybody counts." The culprit in the story has not found a means of making himself actually invisible, as in H. G. Wells' excellent novel with the same title; many persons of the story *did* see him, but did not notice him for a particular reason, so that they swore later (believing themselves truthful) that they saw no one.

Fr. Brown is described as "a very short Roman Catholic priest"; he had a face as round and dull as a Norfolk dumpling; he had eyes as empty as the North Sea; he had several brown paper parcels which he was quite incapable of collecting. "He had a large, shabby umbrella, which constantly fell on the floor. He did not seem to know which was the right end of his return ticket." (Quotations are from "The Blue Cross.")

Unprepossessing, clumsy, absent-minded, and seemingly incompetent, Fr. Brown can overcome all of that when the occasion demands. One of Chesterton's jokes (for these are subtly humorous stories as well as fascinating mysteries) is that most people are nearly always mistaken about just when Fr. Brown should snap out of his reveries and show himself as a person who can make an impression on other persons. He hardly ever does so at times when it seems that he should—but we always see in the end that it was our own naive assumptions which made us look for action at the wrong time. "The Blue Cross" leads off the first collection of Father Brown stories, and may have been the first one written (I have not seen a list showing their original order of publication). It is told from the viewpoint of Valentin, "the head of the Paris police and the most famous investigator of the world," who is on the trail of the notorious criminal, Flambeau. ". . . in his best days (I mean, of course, his worst) Flambeau was a figure as statuesque and international as the Kaiser."

The police believe that Flambeau will be disguised as some minor clerk or secretary connected with the Eucharistic Congress than taking place in London. Flambeau is a master of disguise, but he cannot disguise his height; so the short, clumsy priest cannot be the notorious thief. Fr. Brown is telling people that he has to be careful with his packages, because one of them has something made of real silver, with blue stones. That, of course, is the famous Blue Cross, a prize well worth Flambeau's attention.

Valentin gets side-tracked through no fault of his own, and goes into a restaurant for coffee. He puts sugar in it, to find, when he tastes it, that the sugar bowl is filled with salt—and then finds that sugar is in the salt shaker. While calling the waiter, he also notices a splash of some dark fluid on the walls. The proprietor says it must have been the two clergymen who played the trick, for one of them threw soup at the wall, just before leaving.

Valentin goes out and at a fruiterer's open-air display not far down the street he notices that the price tags in the Brazil nuts and oranges have been switched. He questions the shopman, who tells of two clergymen, one of whom upset his basket of apples. They went thataway, the furious shopman declares.

Now he starts to look for odd occurrences, and when he comes across a restaurant (some time later) with a smashed window, he immediately goes in to inquire. Yes, indeed—two clergymen. They had a "cheap and quiet little lunch," and one of them paid for it and went out. The other was just about to follow when the waiter noticed that the first priest had paid much too much—about three times too much. He looks at the check, and finds that it reads 14 shillings when he was certain that he had made it out to 4 shillings, the correct figure. Then, the waiter continues, "'The parson at the door he says all serene, "Sorry to confuse your accounts but it'll pay for the window." "What window?" I says. "The one I'm going to break," he says, and smashed that blessed pane with his umbrella.'"

The pursuit continues, and it looks as if the two delinquent clergymen are heading toward Hampstead Heath. Twilight is coming on as Valentin steps into a confectionary store and buys some chocolate, looking around to see if there is any evidence here of the parsons' passage. He doesn't see any, but when the woman in the shop sees his uniform she tells him that if he has come about the parcel, she's already sent it off.

Yes, indeed, it's the priestly pair. But a different twist this time. No outrages at all. The two came in, talked for a while, bought some peppermints, then went off toward the Heath. A moment later, one comes back and asks if he left a parcel. The woman looks, but can't find any. The priest tells her not to worry, but should she come upon it later, would she please mail it to a particular address, and he leaves her the address and a shilling to pay for the postage and her trouble. And, though she thought she'd looked everywhere, sure enough, she comes upon it later, so has mailed it as requested—to some place in Westminster.

Valentin finally catches up with the two jokers in clerical

clothes (he has other police with him) and comes upon the pair, who are apparently having some sort of theological discussion:

> "The first he heard was the tail of one of Father Brown's sentences, which ended: '. . . what they really meant in the Middle Ages by the heavens being incorruptible.'
>
> "The taller priest nodded his bowed head and said: 'Ah, yes, these modern infidels appeal to their reason; but who can look at these millions of worlds and not feel that there may well be wonderful universes above us where reason is utterly unreasonable?'"

Shortly thereafter, the tall priest suggests that the short one hand over the Blue Cross, as they are all alone and he could easily pull the short little fellow to pieces. Father Brown declines, whereupon Flambeau says, of course he won't, because he, himself, Flambeau, already has it. He had the sense to make a duplicate of the right parcel, and now Fr. Brown has the duplicate and Flambeau has the Blue Cross.

Father Brown says no, he left the right one behind at the sweet shop (actually, he left it there when he went back to ask *if* he had left it), so the Blue Cross is now in the mails, en route to a friend in Westminster. Flambeau tears open the parcel he has switched from Fr. Brown, and finds it is a dummy. Furious, he declares he doesn't believe that such a bumpkin like Brown could do it, and if Fr. Brown doesn't produce the Blue Cross, he'll take it by force. We're all alone, he says.

Then Fr. Brown reveals himself, for the first time in the long series of tales.

> "'Behind that tree,' said Father Brown, pointing, 'are two strong policemen and the greatest detective alive. How did they come here, do you ask? Why, I brought them of course! How did I do it? Why, I'll tell you if you like! Lord bless you, we have to know twenty such things when we work among the criminal classes! Well, I wasn't sure you were a thief, and it would never do to make a scandal against one of our own clergy. So I just tested you to see if anything would make you show yourself. A man generally makes a small scene if he finds salt in his coffee; if he doesn't, he has some reason for keeping quiet. I changed the salt and sugar, and *you* kept quiet. A man generally objects if his bill is three times too big. If he pays for it, he has some motive for passing unnoticed. I altered your bill, and *you* paid it."

And, of course, all the tricks—none of them really harmful, and Flambeau had paid for the broken window—were to leave a trail the police could follow. He mentions some tricks of the thieves' trade (remember this is prior to 1910) that make Flambeau gasp with horror. Fr. Brown is gratified that Flambeau doesn't know one of the foulest, and when the tall criminal asks him how he knows all these horrors, Fr. Brown says, "Oh, by being a celibate simpleton, I suppose. . . ." (Flambeau has called him that just before the climax.) Fr. Brown continues with the quotation about clerical awareness of evil cited above, ending with: "'But as a matter of fact, another part of my trade, too, made me sure you weren't a priest.'"

"'What?' asked the thief, almost gasping.

"'You attacked reason,' said Father Brown. 'It's bad theology.'"

I do not know whether a real Roman Catholic priest would attack reason today, but at the time of this story, such behavior might well have been grounds for suspicion of imposture. The reason why I cite that, however, is that it is typical of Chesterton's methods. The average Protestant, and the average person in general, would have seen nothing amiss in Flambeau's statement. (I didn't myself, upon first reading back in the 30's.) They would have assumed, being ignorant of theology and Catholicism in general, that such was the way these mystic, unworldly celibates talked. And while Father Brown does not repeat the same words in later stories, a *leitmotiv* has been struck; people around him will be flabbergasted because he does not think and react the way they are sure that a Roman Catholic priest would think and react. They set out to prove Fr. Brown a fool and in the process reveal themselves as ridden with silly notions, some of which have the force of superstitions and many of which are labelled "scientific." Examined in the light of simple reason, his critics prove to be anti-scientific; Fr. Brown, while not a scientist, is a more true friend of genuine science than the worshippers at the shrine of Scientism—a cult which has greatly expanded since the stories were written.

There are five volumes of the Father Brown stories:

The Innocence of Father Brown (1911) contains 12: "The Blue Cross," "The Secret Garden," "The Queer Feet," "The Flying Stars," "The Invisible Man," "The Honour of Israel Gow," "The Wrong Shape," "The Sins of Prince Saradine," "The Hammer of God," "The Eye of Apollo," "The Sign of the Broken Sword," and "The Three Tools of Death." I list the entire contents, as all twelve stories are strong ones, and if you encounter a softcover edition it would be an excellent start.

There are elements of social satire throughout the series; "The Queer Feet" constitutes an example, relating, as it does, why the members of a certain highly exclusive dining society wear green coats. Valentin reappears in "The Secret Garden" and Flambeau in "The Queer Feet" and "The Flying Stars"; at the end of the latter, Fr. Brown makes his appeal to Flambeau to give up the criminal life. We find out in later stories that Brown was successful, as Flambeau appears in many of them as a retired thief, now a private detective, and close friend of the priest. Flambeau never becomes a Watson, however, and none of the stories are told from his viewpoint.

Incidentally, a good way of testing your ability to match wits with the author and Father Brown would be this—if you have not already read "The Flying Stars." Read the story up to the point, near the end, where Fr. Brown sees out of the house into the garden and looks up into a tree where he knows Flambeau is. Stop there. You know that he is going to speak to Flambeau, to persuade him to return the jewelry he has stolen so ingeniously, and to give up the life he is now leading. Stop, think about Fr. Brown and your own impressions of how a Roman Catholic

priest would talk to such a criminal. Then jot down briefly your idea of "the actual grounds" upon which Fr. Brown appeals to Flambeau.

I'd be willing to bet with anyone that you would not even come close. In fact, if you wanted to make a game of it, betting with your friends who might want to play (not having read the story, of course), I'd say that the odds were greatly in your favor.

"The Hammer of God" may be among the most frequently reprinted of the stories. I'm not positive, but I believe that it was the first one I read, in an anthology of famous mystery tales in the high school library, back in Darien circa 1931. "The Honour of Israel Gow" perfectly illustrates Holmes' dictum that when the impossible has been eliminated, then what remains is the truth, however improbable. The clues are there. And it is in "The Sign of the Broken Sword" that we find the well-known quotation: "Where would a wise man hide a leaf? In the forest." Less well known is the subsequent line: "If there were no forest, he would make a forest. And if he wished to hide a dead leaf, he would make a dead forest." All this relates to a historical riddle (I assume that it is fictional history) and one of the most gruesome means of hiding the body of a murdered man that I've ever seen in fiction.

The Wisdom of Father Brown, 1914, also has 12 stories, including "The Absence of Mr. Glass," "The Paradise of Thieves," "The Mistake of the Machine," "The Purple Wig," "The Perishing of the Pendragons," and "The Salad of Colonel Cray." The final three of the tales particularly noted contain seemingly supernatural elements, but Father Brown always assumes a natural explanation for the weirdest of events, and finds it after others have fallen into mystified stupefaction at what looks "supernatural." "The Mistake of the Machine" may not have been the first, but was certainly among the first detective stories to point out the fundamental flaw in mechanical lie-detectors.

The Incredulity of Father Brown, 1926, contains eight stories, all of them strong: "The Resurrection of Father Brown," "The Arrow of Heaven," "The Oracle of the Dog," "The Miracle of Moon Crescent," "The Curse of the Golden Cross," "The Dagger with Wings," "The Doom of the Darnaways," and "The Ghost of Gideon Wise." It is from "The Oracle of the Dog" that we have the famous quotation: "'The dog could almost have told you the story, if he could talk,' said the priest. "All I complain of is that because he couldn't talk, you made up his story for him, and made him talk with the tongues of men and angels.'"

And he continues: "'It's part of something I've noticed more and more in the modern world, appearing in all sorts of newspaper rumours and conversational catchwords; something that's arbitrary without being authoritative. People readily swallow the untested claims of this, that, or other. It's drowning all your old rationalism and scepticism, it's coming in like a sea; and the name of it is superstition. It's the first effect of not believing in God that you lose your common sense, and can't see things as they are. Anything that anybody talks about, and says there's a good deal in it, extends itself indefinitely like a vista in a nightmare.'"

"The Miracle of Moon Crescent" is beautifully caustic in the difference between what Father Brown and a group of self-proclaimed "scientific" laymen are willing to call a miracle. And "The Doom of the Darnaways" punctures the old tried-and-true doom-of-the-family stories. We all may (and perhaps should) continue to enjoy them as fiction, but I think I'll always remember, even then, how silly it all becomes when you drop resounding names like "Darnaway" and speak of the Doom of the Browns. Oh, doubtless some folk named Brown have met direful enough dooms, but somehow the wings of horror don't flap fearsomely over the thought.

The Secret of Father Brown, 1927, has ten stories, with the first and last as frames. In the first, the title story, Father Brown reveals his method in order to prevent being credited with supernatural powers by The Second Sight Sisterhood; the eight stories that follow are examples; then we conclude with "The Secret of Flambeau." Particularly good in this volume are "The Man With Two Beards," "The Song of the Flying Fish," "The Red Moon of Meru," and "The Chief Mourner of Marne." The last mentioned is especially biting in its portrayal of the difference between what most people call human charity and what Father Brown calls Christian charity. Fr. Brown is soundly denounced for lack of charity toward sinners so long as the company involved in the story believes that the homicide involved was a duel. When they learn that it was not, but genuinely foul murder by treachery, they change their tune drastically. One of them says there is a limit to human charity, and Fr. Brown replies: "There is . . . and that is the real difference between human charity and Christian charity. You must forgive me if I was not altogether crushed by your contempt for my uncharitableness today; or by the lectures you read me about pardon for every sinner. For it seems to me that you only pardon the sins that you

don't really think sinful. You only forgive criminals when they commit what you don't regard as crimes, but rather as conventions. So you tolerate a conventional duel, just as you tolerate a conventional divorce. You forgive because there isn't anything to be forgiven."

Someone objects that he doesn't expect them to be able to pardon a vile thing like this, does he? Fr. Brown replies, no, he does not, but priests *have* to be able to pardon it. ". . . We alone are left to deliver them from despair when your human charity deserts them. Go on your primrose path pardoning all your favorite vices and being generous to your fashionable crimes; and leave us in the darkness, vampires of the night, to console those who really need consolation; who do the really indefensible things, that neither the world nor they themselves can defend; and none but a priest will pardon. . . ."

The Scandal of Father Brown, 1935, offers nine stories, including "The Quick One," "The Blast of the Book," "The Green Man," and "The Crime of the Communist." In the title story, Father Brown sees the truth almost at once, simply because he is *not* a romanticist; he remains untouched by "The Blast of the Book" (an amusing take-off on *Necronomicon*-like things, although whether Chesterton ever read H. P. Lovecraft is unknown to me) because he is not superstitious; and you should realize by now that "The Crime of the Communist" is nothing at all like what the title would lead you to expect.

There is one more story, the last Father Brown tale Chesterton wrote: "The Vampire of the Village." All 51 stories can be found in the 1951 (New and Revised Edition) volume of *The Father Brown Omnibus*, published by Dodd, Mead & Company. The earlier edition does not contain the final short story, which is a very good one.

What is the basis of the appeal that Father Brown has had for literate mystery story lovers from the very beginning? I would suggest, first of all, that these are intricate mysteries relating to general human motivation and behavior, much more than crime tales, although nearly all concern themselves with crimes. More than that, they are heavy in paradox, which not only tests the wits, but also stimulates thought about the difference between appearances and reality.

G. K. Chesterton is not a magician on the order of A. Conan Doyle. As W. W. Robson points out in his article, "G. K. Chesterton's 'Father Brown' Stories," in the Summer 1969 issue of *The Southern Review*, it is the magic view of Holmes which we receive through Watson's admiring eyes that convinces us of the Master Detective's greatness. One need only read the two tales in the canon written by Holmes himself to see the difference. We who are under Watson's spell love "The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier," and "The Adventure of the Lion's Mane," even when we are aware of the flat quality of Holmes' presentation, because the mesmerism that the good Watson has woven around us lingers, so that we see Holmes himself as Watson has trained us to see him. But a person who had never read a single Holmes story, or never seen a film, could never discover from reading these two tales why actual and spiritual members of the Baker Street Irregulars are so enthralled.

There is no such spell over Father Brown, nothing at all to glamorize him as Holmes is so transformed by his Boswell. (Remember: Holmes does not recognize himself in Watson's accounts, and feels that his friend and colleague has distorted things and neglected what is really of importance.) The spell here is the spell of a prestidigitator, Chesterton himself. And there *is* a spell, for we see only what the people around Father Brown see (except when we're awfully clever, and perhaps have learned how to catch Chesterton in one of his repeated acts), so we are baffled as they. After a few stories, we may realize that what appears to be is not so–and yet, how seldom will most readers see as clearly as the bumbling little priest, who (it must be said) hardly ever comes to life as a "real" character–but yet is so satisfactory for exactly what Chesterton has made him to be.

Consider "The Green Man." As Robson points out, the essential clue is given directly. Here it is:

> "Then Harker spoke, and his voice rang hollow in the room.
> "'I am sorry to say we are bearers of bad news. Admiral Craven was drowned before reaching home. . . .'
> "'When did this happen?' asked the priest.
> "'Where was he found?' asked the lawyer."

At that Father Brown knows the answer to the mystery, and I should have seen it myself, but didn't. If you do not already know the story, see if you can come to the conclusion that Father Brown did before you read the footnote below.*

The Father Brown stories derive, of course, from Edgar Allan Poe's Dupin tale, "The Purloined Letter." For in one way or another, the solution to the mystery in these stories is nearly always right out in plain sight–but turned inside out; at least, that was the case for British readers when the stories were written. For American readers of half a century later, some of what the truly alert reader of the day might have spotted is now obscure; in a number of

*With no more data than that, persons hearing it would assume that the Admiral was lost at sea. The question, "Where was he found?" could relevantly be asked only by someone who knew that the Admiral was *not* drowned at sea.

Chesterton slips in this story, by having Father Brown know something which he could not have known–the motive for the murder, which he has no opportunity to uncover. However, even the great Sherlock Holmes sometimes came up with a solution which could not have been deduction or induction, but no more or less than intuition.

Continued on page 235

EDMUND WILSON AND THE DETECTIVE STORY

By Carl Byron Dickson

From time to time some of our literary journals publish articles critical of both the reader and the writer of the detective story, and this is as it should be. Neither is above reproach. But some of the critics seem profoundly unjust. For example, there is that damning tirade, "Who Cares Who Killed Roger Ackroyd," written some years ago by Mr. Edmund Wilson, a critic of high repute. Since his argument takes the line used by most of those who find fault with the detective story, it is just as well to consider what he has to say.

That a critic of one branch of literature should throw stones at another branch is, in itself, nothing new. But Mr. Wilson, in this essay, has surprisingly shown himself to be quite unjust and dogmatic. He has assailed both readers and writers of the detective story in rather strong and abusive language, apparently forgetting what philosopher David Hume says of the standard of taste: "We are apt to call barbarous whatever departs widely from our own taste and apprehension; but soon find the epithet of reproach retorted on us. And the highest arrogance and self-conceit is at last startled, on observing an equal assurance on all sides, and scruples, amidst such a contest of sentiment, to pronounce positively in its own favour." Mr. Wilson should not be surprised, therefore, to find "the epithet of reproach" hurled at his head!

If we were to descend to Mr. Wilson's plane, forgetting our manners for a moment and assuming his position of self-justified wrath, our answer to his strictures might take the following form: like what Spinoza says in regard to Jesus and his recorders that their work tells us more of them, of their likes and dislikes, than of Jesus Mr. Wilson's essay tells us more of himself than it does of the detective story. And it is revealing! He barges in, knocking everything over in his haste to prove himself right and us wrong. And, not only does he commit the unpardonable sin of revealing too much about the stories which he criticizes, but he thoroughly berates Miss Sayers and Miss Marsh, saying of the former that she "does not write very well," and of the latter that her story is even more tedious than the former's. He also takes exception to Bernard De Voto for saying that these authors write "excellent prose," and adds that he thinks De Voto "totally insensitive to writing." He calls the mystery field "sub-literary," and finds a book in the genre recommended to him by a knowledgeable member of his family "completely unreadable."

His final conclusions are as ludicrous as the entire article itself; and we may say with some justice what he so uncharitably says of De Voto, that he is "totally insensitive to writing," or, at the very least, to the writing of the detective story. Wilson says, moreover, that we feel guilty about reading them and are on the defensive all the time, and that "all our talk about 'well-written' mysteries is simply an excuse for our vice, like the reasons that the alcoholic can always produce for a drink." He calls us shameless addicts, and mysteries rubbish, and he tries to prove a friend right in his estimation of the detective story by using himself and his reactions as proof of the theory.

Of course, Mr. Wilson is an authority on this subject (he admits to reading six or seven books in the genre). He doesn't want to read detective stories and he doesn't want us to read them either. He wants them curtailed, banished from the bookshelves. He considers reading them "wasteful of time and degrading of the intelligence," and contends that we are "bullied by convention and the portentously invoked examples of Woodrow Wilson and Andre Gide" into reading them. And he croaks encouragement to those seven who wrote in to say that they agreed with him.

Who would wish to curry his favor? We do not need his approval for anything, least of all for the books we read. Taste is personal and we are all prejudiced where it is concerned. If Mr. Wilson believed he was an authority on the detective story, he was mistaken. He was only an authority on his own likes and dislikes. He cannot legislate for anyone but himself—or those who choose to be swayed by his opinion.

What is surprising in Mr. Wilson's pronouncements is his insistence on his infallibility in the matter. Nowhere does he admit that he might be wrong, or that there might be some good in detective fiction. He remains thoroughly

dogmatic throughout. It is remarkable that he should let our taste for detective fiction so upset him that he denounces us in angry tones.

He champions Thackeray, Proust and Mann as if they badly needed a sponsor, but if he is setting them as a standard by which to judge authors of detective fiction he is making a mistake. The detective story and the so-called modern novel are two very different things and should not be judged together. The rules of the former are very different from those of a regular novel. The aim of the detective story is to mystify and entertain. Its format is akin to Poe's rules for the short story. It has a beginning in which the dramatis personae are introduced, a middle in which the plot thickens, and a denouement in which the climax is reached and all is satisfactorily explained. It thus has an order of procedure from beginning to end, with a definite aim in view. It cannot dawdle, or ramble as the novel does, but must keep to the business in hand.

We can delve into the novel at almost any point and see some episode unfold before our eyes. The novel is thus episodic. It goes by spurts from one episode to the next, but hardly any single episode is absolutely essential to the tale. Many could be deleted without doing irreparable harm to the whole. One can pick up *Vanity Fair* or *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* at almost any point and thoroughly enjoy whatever meets the eye.

But this cannot be done with a detective story. Every paragraph is necessary to it—or should be! Where the novel is rambling and episodic, the detective story has to hew to the line. Economy is the rule.

Thus it is a mistake to lump the detective story and the novel together. They are different, and what holds for one does not necessarily hold for the other. Mr. Wilson has come to the detective story obviously expecting to find an episodic, rambling novel and, by his own admission, he has skipped significant parts of it. It is no wonder, therefore, that he has been disappointed.

I am a devotee of Thackeray, Proust and Mann myself, and I don't hesitate to recommend them to my friends—if they seek my advice on the matter—but I never lay down the law to them or chide them when I find a detective story in their hands. Detective stories are just another outlet for our emotions as Thackeray is, and sometimes when both the weather and I are at odds, Thackeray just won't do and I need something altogether different, something light and intriguing. It is at such times that I take down a Sayers or a Carr and forget all the so-called rules of literature and just relax and enjoy myself, as I did during critical periods of World War Two. After a bout with Dr. Fell or Lord Peter Wimsey I come back, refreshed, to my other joys. I think it a pity some cannot enjoy both the serious and the light fiction, while always remembering the difference between them. Schopenhauer has said, "You cannot read bad literature too little or good literature too much," but detective fiction is not bad literature. Neither is it the best. It strikes a happy medium between the two, and it has its place and its uses. During the last war, how many people did the detective story help to get through bad times, when the bombs were falling and death stood grinning at their elbow? Many thousands, at the least! Maugham admitted they helped him over a bad time, as they did me.

Mr. Wilson acknowledged that he "had not read any fiction of this kind since the days of Sherlock Holmes" (as if the days of Sherlock Holmes were over!) and remarked that the animated discussions he overheard of the merits of the mystery writers goaded him into seeing what this fiction was like today. Those he read he found disappointing, and his derogatory remarks resulted. Then one reader advised that he try reading other detective stories until he found one he could admire and enjoy a piece of kindly advice he dared to equate with that of the opium smoker who advises a novice not to mind if the first pipe makes him sick but to try again!

Mr. Wilson, by his own admission, read little in the detective field, and we must not expect a man ill-conversed with this form of writing to be an authority on it. As Hume says: "When objects of any kind are first presented to the eye or imagination, the sentiment which attends them is obscure and confused; and the mind is, in a great measure, incapable of pronouncing concerning their merits or defects. The taste cannot perceive the several excellences of the performance, much less distinguish the particular character of each excellency, and ascertain its quality and degree. . . . A critic . . . must free his mind from all prejudice and allow nothing to enter into his consideration but the very object which is submitted to his examination. . . . We may observe, that every work of art, in order to produce its due effect on the mind, must be surveyed in a certain point of view, and cannot be fully relished by persons, whose situation, real or imaginary, is not conformable to that which is required by the performance, otherwise his taste loses all credit and authority."

It is clear to anyone who has read Mr. Wilson's strictures on the detective story that his "sentiments have been perverted." And Hume adds: "Prejudice is destructive of sound judgment, and perverts all operations of the intellectual faculties. . . . Every individual ought to acquiesce in his own sentiment, without pretending to regulate those of others." I wonder if Mr. Wilson had delicacy to be "sensible of every beauty and every blemish, in any composition or discourse." And, further, "a delicate taste of wit or beauty must always be a desirable quality, because it is the source of all the finest and most innocent enjoyments of which human nature is susceptible."

This, surely, leaves little to be said.

WICKED DREAMS: THE WORLD OF SHERIDAN LE FANU

By David Brownell

J. S. Le Fanu: Ghost Stories and Mysteries, a 1975 collection selected and edited by E. F. Bleiler, offers an opportunity to discuss one of the two great Victorian mystery writers. Unlike his contemporary Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu is as well known for his ghost stories as for his mysteries; this Dover collection is long on the first and short on the second. This book and its Dover predecessor, *Best Ghost Stories of J. S. Le Fanu* (1964; also edited by Bleiler) include all of Le Fanu's ghost stories, and deserve discussion as representing a side of Le Fanu which is important in all his work.

Le Fanu's ghost stories have an economy usually absent in his novels--many of which are expansions of plot elements found in his ghost tales. In fact, Le Fanu is a great self-plagiarist: in character types, plots, and terrors he has a narrow range, and his continual recycling of his materials is irritating to anyone who reads several Le Fanu works in succession.

Le Fanu's territory as a writer is the realm of the unpleasant. His characters are almost invariably unpleasant people, and often very evil ones indeed. Le Fanu seems to know very well what evil lurks in the hearts of men, and to be more interested by his villains than by his heroes and heroines. His settings too are often unpleasant places, which exude a damp suggestion that horrible events have left a mark. An eerie unpleasantness surrounds the actors, and sometimes Le Fanu suggests the horrible with one economical phrase, as in the somehow terrible apparition of a "fat white hand."

Le Fanu seems to feel that tales of the supernatural cannot be set in his own period. He distances them by setting them at least one long life before his own time. Perhaps a ghost in contemporary costume will always seem funny: spooks don't weak bikinis or bermuda shorts. But another reason exists for this distancing of the setting of Le Fanu's ghost stories: like the mystery story, the ghost story often finds the explanation of puzzling present events in actions that took place in the past. The shared assumption seems to be that a past wrong-doing will come out, and a balance of justice must be restored. But Le Fanu's world does not usually involve the restoration of order which Auden's essay "The Guilty Vicarage" explains as the aspect of the mystery novel which makes it comforting to its readers. In Le Fanu's mysteries and ghost stories the innocent often suffer severe punishment along with the guilty, and the world around them is not at all beneficent.

Indeed, some of Le Fanu's stories have the quality of folklore, and may have been suggested by Irish folk tales. In these, as in many fairy tales, the supernatural beings operate by rules of their own, and can acquire dominion over mortals whose acts put them within the fairy power, even though the mortal has committed no sin. Or the supernatural world can reach out to affect

ordinary humans who have by wrongdoing rendered themselves vulnerable. One of Le Fanu's fascinations in many of his stories is with revenants—the dead who return to exact revenge or to attend to unfinished business, either by atoning for past wickedness, or by completing it. Sometimes these figures have no connection with the mortals whom they haunt, but do great harm to them with no motive; sometimes they have every reason for the damage they do. Often in Le Fanu's mind the revenant theme is connected with a particular setting which recurs frequently in his work—a mysterious and ominous lake, with a small island in its center.

Another recurring subject is that of a sinner who is given a warning vision of his own judgment: when he fails to reform, he is taken away by the forces of evil. Perhaps the best of these is "Mr. Justice Harbottle," which appears in Bleiler's 1964 volume. Harbottle, a corrupt judge, is taken off to be judged himself by a mysterious "High Court of Appeal," which sentences him to die in one month. A month later he is found hanging in his own hallway. Perhaps he committed suicide; but where did the rope come from? Le Fanu leaves the reader able to believe that the protagonist may be suffering from an hallucination—but other characters see unexplained things too, out of the corners of their eyes. Le Fanu's world is full of unlit corners in which lurk dark awful things more felt than seen.

Often Le Fanu's characters encounter a supernatural nemesis which represents retribution for long-hidden guilt. Sometimes the fatality haunting the protagonist suggests that aspects of his psyche he has suppressed are having their revenge. One such in the 1964 collection is "Green Tea," in which a respectable clergyman is haunted by the apparition of a monkey which prevents his prayers by blaspheming, and makes him despair of salvation. Under

its influence he commits suicide. Perhaps his own repressed doubts and sexuality have emerged with a vengeance?

Some of Le Fanu's stories involve the conventional figures of horror tales. One such is "Carmilla," certainly the best vampire story before Stoker's *Dracula.* This story, found in the 1964 collection, brings out more clearly than *Dracula* the sexuality of the vampire, and even makes the relationship of the vampire and her victim a lesbian one. A reader may find this story suggests ideas about Geraldine in Coleridge's "Christabel." (Incidentally, "A Chapter in the History of a Tyrone Family" in the 1975 volume, originally published in 1839, has been suggested as the source of Charlotte Bronte's plot for *Jane Eyre.*)

Despite the title of the 1975 collection, none of the stories are really mysteries, though one does involve a locked-room puzzle "The Murdered Cousin," which was later expanded into Le Fanu's novel *Uncle Silas.* "The Room in the Dragon Volant" is a tale about the hazards undergone by a young Englishman touring in France who gets involved with swindling adventurers: while it explains some mysterious disappearances, which had seemed supernatural, it is neither a ghost tale nor a mystery, but a suspense story like Wilkie Collins' "A Terribly Strange Bed."

As most of Le Fanu's works are out of print and hard to find, a reader who wants to investigate this writer might want to start with the 1964 Dover collection, which contains more of Le Fanu's best work than the newer collection. I would hope that the reader could find some of Le Fanu's best novels as well. But perhaps before I consider Le Fanu's novels, I should say something about the man who wrote them.

Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu was born in Dublin in 1814, of a family addicted to writing. He was descended from a sister of the playwright Sheridan, whose mother had been a novelist, and was connected with several other writing Sheridans; his mother, Lucretia Dobbin, wrote various kinds of non-fiction. Young Le Fanu grew up in a troubled country–a description of Ireland that applies at any point in its history and his family, who supported the union with England, suffered from peasant hostility during the Tithe War of 1831. Le Fanu attended Trinity College, Dublin, a pillar of the Anglo-Irish establishment, and then trained for the law, but never practiced it. He started writing fiction in 1837, but was always a part-time writer, making his living in journalism as owner, editor, and writer for various papers, such as *The Warder,* a weekly newspaper he owned and edited from 1841, *The Protestant Guardian,* which he owned, and the distinguished *Dublin University Magazine,* which Le Fanu edited after 1861.

Most of Le Fanu's earlier writings are occasional pieces, which, by the usual magazine practice of the day, were unsigned. In later years Le Fanu collected some of these pieces for book republication; but such of his pieces as he himself did not collect can be attributed to him only by critical guesswork. The bulk of Le Fanu's fiction was written for serialization in his own publications: of his fourteen novels, eight appeared in *Dublin University Magazine* after his editorship began.

We know little of Le Fanu's private life. He was popular in Dublin society, and a very sociable man in his earlier years. In 1844 he married Susan Bennet, by whom he had four children. The marriage seems to have been happy; at any rate, when she died in 1858, Le Fanu was greatly distressed, and his style of life began to change. He became more and more of a recluse. Most of his novels were written in this period. It is recorded that he wrote in bed, between midnight and dawn. The taste for the supernatural which had found an outlet earlier in the ghost stories he had written during his married years, now colors most of his fiction.

In his last years Le Fanu spent more and more of his time as a reclusive invalid. He suffered from a recurrent dream of being in a house which was about to collapse; after being called to Le Fanu's bedside, when Le Fanu was found dead on Feb. 7, 1873, his doctor said, "I feared as much; the house has fallen." Evidently Le Fanu had the power to evoke Le Fanu characters in his own life.

Copies of most of Le Fanu's novels are not easily found nowadays. I would not have been able to write this discussion without the kindness of Al Hubin, who made accessible to me copies of two important works. Where I have been unable to find a copy of a Le Fanu work, I offer evaluations from other critics who have read the work, and in the bibliography at the end of this article, I will identify such Le Fanu works as are in print.

Le Fanu's first two novels were written in the early years of his marriage. The first of these, *The Cock and Anchor* (1845), is set in the Ireland of 1710, with Le Fanu's characteristic fondness for stories set in the past. It is not a good historical novel, as it tells us little about the period in which it is set and makes no use of that period other than to offer a few melodramatic scenes of anti-English conspiracies which are not essential to the plot. Le Fanu seems to use the past only in order to lend plausibility to various family death-warnings and other supernatural tokens not acceptable in a contemporary setting.

Le Fanu seems uncertain of what he wants to do in this book–a fault that recurs in his works, which rarely aim at or achieve any artistic unity. Here he seems to be trying to write a tragic novel, in which the hero and heroine die of frustrated love; but he includes the usual tedious and allegedly comis Irish servant. Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoor* is the model of the sort of thing Le Fanu may have had in mind; but Scott's tragedy works because the lovers are separated for reasons which are real in their state of society. Here, if a few coincidences which separate the pair were removed, nothing would keep them from marrying and living happily ever after. So not fate but the author seems cruel. But since Le Fanu, unlike Scott, fails to interest the reader in

any of the characters, the reader's sufferings are minimal.

While the novel is not a mystery, it has some interest for the reader of Le Fanu's mysteries, since Le Fanu uses here for the first time characters we will find again in several of the mysteries. He likes a situation in which a family has as its head an ill-tempered old aristocrat who is rapidly dissipating his family's fortune. There are two children, a gambling-mad son and a sweet simple daughter. When the old father dies, the son, having gambled away everything, including his sister's inheritance, is entrapped into forging the signature of an enemy. Since forgery is a capital crime, the enemy can blackmail the son into forcing the unwilling sister into marriage. She is held prisoner in a ruinous mansion- but escapes. The escape scene is more vivid here than in its subsequent retreads, but otherwise I cannot praise this novel, and see no reason why anyone need read it.

Le Fanu's next novel was *The Fortunes of Colonel Torlogh O'Brien* (1847), set in the Ireland of 1689-1691. I have not found a copy of this work, but the only available biography of Le Fanu, Nelson Browne's *Sheridan Le Fanu* (London, 1951), suggests the book is negligible: as Browne overrates many of the novels I have read, I am willing to believe him when he asserts that some of the others are bad.

Le Fanu's remaining novels are from the period after his wife's death, and unless otherwise noted, were originally serialized in *Dublin University Magazine*; the first three of these works are Le Fanu's best; thereafter his works drop off in quality. Some critics consider *The House by the Churchyard* (1863) Le Fanu's greatest novel, but I think it inferior to *Wylder's Hand* both as a mystery and as a novel because of its uncertainty of tone. Again Le Fanu seems not quite sure of what he is trying to do. The uncertainty can be found from the novel's very beginning, which displays Le Fanu's characteristic awkwardness in choosing his narrative structure and point of view - an awkwardness found in the works of many English writers of twenty years earlier (for example, look at the beginning chapters of Dickens' *Pickwick Papers* or *Martin Chuzzlewit*), but mastered by the successful Victorian novelists as

the novel developed in the mid-century. Le Fanu's narrator, Charles de Cresseron, begins by evoking the scene of his story, the Dublin suburb of Chapelizod in the year 1767. But then, not content with starting so abruptly, he describes the Chapelizod of his own boyhood, when he found in the churchyard a skull with two holes in it, evidently the relic of some past violence. Charles and his uncle the vicar are then told by an old soldier the story of the skull's owner, which Charles, grown old, retells, with the aid of additional information from old letters and diaries. The three separate time periods thus introduced are not used; and, as the narrator does not intrude either himself or his sources into his story, a reader feels that it might have been simpler and more effective to begin the story in 1767 without all the preliminary toing and froing.

The House by the Churchyard should, I think, properly be described as a novel rather than a mystery: although there is a mystery which has to be cleared up, the story is not dependent on the mystery and its solution. The novel offers a picture of a vanished Ireland and of its upper-class society, with the mystery and a ghost story thrown in for a bonus. (The ghost story, the haunting of the Tiled House by a fat white hand, is reprinted in the 1964 Bleiler collection.)

Le Fanu offers as characters most of the population of Chapelizod, and the officers of the regiment stationed there. Society amuses itself with parties, gambling, drinking, flirting, and duelling. Le Fanu takes a sardonic view of this society, with some of its members engaged in social climbing, and others just out of the bogs: it is a world rather like that of *The Three Sisters*, with the military stationed in the town so long that they have become a part of it. But occasionally in such a society people who have to see each other day after day grate on each other because of rivalry or personality until violence occurs.

Events in the novel begin on a stormy night when the old vicar is called out to officiate at the mysterious midnight burial of the coffin of an unnamed man who has been dead twenty-one years. Mr. Mervyn, a gloomy young man with a secret, has brought the casket to town, and told the vicar his secret, which the reader will not learn for many pages. Le Fanu manages his suspense well, and the reader remains interested in learning those things which are being kept secret; but a great deal of the suspense is synthetic: the reader is not told things most of the characters do know.

Gradually, however, we learn of a crime committed some years ago, for which Mervyn's father was wrongly condemned and executed; the murderer, who is still undiscovered, seems to be known to some members of this pleasant society. Enmities arise over rivalry for the town's medical practice, and for the position of estate agent to the local peer. These enmities are now assuaged, now enflamed, by the masterful Mr. Dangerfield, the peer's English agent. Dr. Sturk, the military doctor, who has been angling for Dr. Toole's practice and Mr. Nutter's agency, is attacked and left for dead with a severe concussion. Several per-

sons who have motives are suspected, but the only witness continues to lie unconscious. Local love-making and social games come to a halt: finally Dangerfield resolves to make the only witness speak. He hires Black Dillon, a drunken but brilliant young Dublin surgeon, to release the pressure on Sturk's brain by trepanning his skull. Dangerfield says the only question is whether Sturk will die now, usefully, or later, unable to speak. The reader waits, while the drunken doctor is late: and then waits again outside the patient's room with Mrs. Sturk, hearing terrible mysterious sounds. The scene is dreadfully effective, and ends in the unmasking of the unknown murderer. It is perhaps the most memorable part of the novel, and may have shown Le Fanu the direction he could most profitably pursue in succeeding works.

At any rate, in his next novel Le Fanu wrote a genuinely great mystery. I cannot understand why no one has reprinted *Wylder's Hand*, his finest work. I shall avoid revealing the plot secrets in the hope that you may be able to lay your hands on a copy somewhere, or that someone will reprint the story.

Wylder's Hand (1864) is a genuine mystery: the whole story depends on the discovery of what has happened to Mark Wylder. In the beginning section the characters and their relationships are established: Charles de Cresseron, again the narrator, introduces us to an English house party at Brandon Abbey. Mark Wylder and Dorcas Brandon, his cousin, are about to marry to settle a family property dispute. Mark is boorish, shrewd, and dissipated; he seems unsure that he wants to marry the beautiful but bovine Dorcas—perhaps he would prefer another cousin, Rachel Lake, with whom he has flirted in the past. Rachel's brother Stanley Lake (whose name suggests that he is a snake and villain), has just been forced to sell his army commission—he is not the sort of person his fellow officers want in the regiment. Stanley would like to marry the heiress Dorcas himself, and tries to blackmail Mark, an old enemy, into leaving the country. (Rachel and Stanley fit into the recurrent pattern of wicked brother and virtuous sister which first appears in *The Cock and Anchor*.)

Stanley obviously knows something very discreditable about Mark; but from their sparring, it seems Mark may know something worse about him. A mysterious confrontation between them occurs, which the narrator cannot report; Stanley seems to be foiled, but Mark goes up to London, and does not return. A series of letters in his hand announce that an enemy's plots have forced him to flee, and that he is involved in countermining.

Whatever has happened, the orderly pattern of life is disrupted. The marriage is broken off, and Stanley makes hay in Mark's absence. Meanwhile, the servile village solicitor Larkin, hoping to profit from standing between Mark and Stanley as an agent for each, tries to detect the truth, feeling sure that his knowledge can lead to a profit at someone's expense. He is the closest person to a detective the novel offers, and, like most detectives before Sherlock Holmes is a character condemned by the author, a character whose motive for snooping into the private lives of others is personal profit rather than any defense of society's rules.

The novel's atmosphere is often spooky: an insane uncle of Dorcas' roams about the landscape, believing himself to be the family ghost, and offering Dantesque visions of Mark Wylder confined in hell. (Uncle Lorne evidently made a strong impression on Lord Peter Wimsey, who refers to him in *The Nine Tailors*.) All the important male characters are thoroughly unpleasant people, and the situation rapidly comes to resemble a fight between several scorpions in a bottle. Even the landscape participates. (One setting is rather reminiscent of the Shivering Sands in *The Moonstone*.)

Is Mark Wylder dead? The reader may think he knows, as Larkin thinks he does: but then Le Fanu contrives two jolting surprises which force you to reconsider all that you have believed you knew. The first is, perhaps, unfair—but effective. The second is even more successful. The novel is written with greater technical skill than Le Fanu usually shows. While his choice of a first-person narrator seems more awkward than useful, and de Cresseron fades into omniscience after Wylder's disappearance, he does add something by experiencing personally the mysterious visitations of the ghostly Uncle Lorne. Le Fanu manages well his actual deceptions of the reader, providing unexplained situations in which the characters' remarks are legitimately ambiguous.

One complaint made by critics who praise the book (for example, Julian Symons in *Mortal Consequences*) is that it is too long: admittedly it is not short—economy was not a virtue prized by the Victorian artist—but it is absorbing. Read it if you can find a copy.

In his next novel, serialized in 1864 under the title of *Maud Ruthyn*, and reprinted in volume form with the title changed to emphasize the villain, *Uncle Silas*, Le Fanu chose to concentrate on the eerie atmosphere of menace which had formed a part of *The House by the Churchyard*. No doubt finding his invention flagging under the pressure of constant writing, he recycled an old plot: a story had appeared in 1838 under the title of "An Episode in the Secret History of an Irish Countess," and had been revised for an 1851 collection as "The Murdered Cousin," in which form the reader can now find

it in the 1975 Bleiler collection. Le Fanu shifts his story to England, and embellishes it, but the plot is the same.

Dover, which has reprinted *Uncle Silas,* accurately calls the work "a Victorian Gothic Novel of Mystery." I would add that the Gothic predominates over the mystery. The reader knows pretty well what to expect when he learns that the heroine, Maud Ruthyn, is an attractive young girl, shy, emotional, and indecisive, raised in seclusion by a peculiar father, and that on her father's death she will become the ward of his brother Silas, who is believed by most of the world to have murdered a bookmaker to whom he owed large sums of money. And when Maud reaches her uncle's ruinous mansion of Bartram Haugh, the site of the mysterious locked-room murder, and finds herself amidst her mystically religious and opium-addicted uncle, his rustic, handsome, and vicious son, and a full complement of surly sinister servants, with everyone aware that at her death, her uncle will inherit her large fortune, we can predict the rest.

There is no real mystery about the outcome: as the story is told in the first person, we assume Maud will escape. Her cousin Milly is her only helper. (Once again in the Silas Ruthyn family we find the pattern of corrupt father, vicious son, and virtuous sister.) Such doubts as may exist about the reality of Silas's religion don't keep us guessing long. The question of whether and how the bookmaker was murdered in a locked room is a very subsidiary one, and when the locked room mystery is finally explained, the solution lacks the ingenuity of those Wilkie Collins finds for similar problems.

Nor are the characters brilliantly portrayed. Maud is simply a standard heroine, of the foolhardy and not too bright variety, although she is less inclined than most Victorian heroines to be hypocritical about her interest in attractive and well-to-do members of the opposite sex. Le Fanu's villains are usually more interesting than his virtuous people: but Madame de la Rougierre, Maud's corrupt governess, and the other subordinate villains are merely grotesque. Uncle Silas himself has the cold power of the best Le Fanu villains, but if Le Fanu had tried to do what Dickens planned in *Edwin Drood,* and shown from within a hypocrite's view of his own hypocrisy, the book might have been more interesting.

Why, then, has this book such a reputation? Its atmosphere explains its fame. *Uncle Silas* is more about death than about its characters. Le Fanu, like the heroine's father, was fascinated by the Swedenborgians; but instead of finding comfort in a sense that the world around him was linked by a thousand ties to an unseen and brighter world, he seems to have found everywhere death in the midst of life. The book is filled with sinister dreams and apparitions, some of which are rationally explained, some not.

The essence of Gothic, of course, is a vaguely pornographic concentration on a helpless heroine, surrounded by threats and menaces, usually of a sexual nature. She is never violated, but always about to be; unspeakable things are suggested, but never clearly seen or performed: in the midst of terror she is powerless.

The powerlessness of such a heroine surrounded by vague menaces seems rather like that reported by opium addicts as a characteristic of their dreams, and the atmosphere of *Uncle Silas* is often reminiscent of the opium world described by Thomas De Quincey, and glimpsed in such other nineteenth century addicts as Coleridge, Crabbe, and James Thomson. I have not seen the suggestion made by any previous critic, but it seems possible to me that in his later years Le Fanu may have been addicted to some opiate. Several of his characters are—among them Stanley Lake, Uncle Silas, and the villain of *Checkmate*—and perhaps such an addiction might explain why the novels after *Uncle Silas* deteriorate and become more filled with terrible incoherent dreams, just when one would expect that Le Fanu had hit his stride as a novelist.

I have only been able to find one of the later Le Fanu novels, and can only list the others with comments on them from Browne and from Bleiler's useful introduction to his 1975 collection. *Guy Deverell* (1865) is a long-winded mystery set in a country house full of secret passages. Browne says it has some merit, a claim he does not make for *All in the Dark* (1866), a shorter work ridiculing spiritualism and full of village wooing. Next came *The Tenants of Mallory* (1867), tedious and sentimental, involving a question of identity. The solicitor Larkin from *Wylder's Hand* reappears here, as he does again in *Haunted Lives* (1868), which Browne calls decadent and morbid. Also in 1868 came *A Lost Name,* which was serialized in *Temple Bar.* Browne, who evidently got very tired of reading lesser Le Fanu, calls this one padded and tedious; he adds that it is an expansion of the 1851 "The Evil Guest" (available in the 1975 Bleiler collection), which is itself an expansion of the 1848 "Richard Marston of Donoran." The story involves again a sealed room murder. Bleiler speaks more favorably of *Haunted Lives* and *A Lost Name* than Browne; he calls them "strong and sparse in story, economical in episode and character, saturated with a mood of inevitability, brilliantly written, and fascinating in their symbolic abstraction" so that "the reader at times feels himself involved in cosmic processes of good and evil." *Haunted Lives* "is an incredibly sustained ambiguity: although the modern reader soon recognizes that one of the characters is in masquerade, and that there is no mystery in this aspect of the novel, he must admire the skill with which Le Fanu flaunts the ambiguity, instead of concealing it." Perhaps Bleiler and Dover will provide us the chance to read these works.

The Wyvern Mystery (1869) is based on the earlier "Episode in the History of a Tyrone Family" (1839), reprinted in the 1975 Bleiler collection. Browne and Bleiler both give this novel qualified praise.

Cassell's Magazine serialized in 1870 *Checkmate, or, The Longcluse Mystery,* published in book form in 1871, the

one late Le Fanu novel I have been able to read. While critics occasionally mention *Checkmate*, it is definitely inferior Le Fanu, and I feel no qualms about revealing the plot, since I see no reason anyone should want to read it. However, I cannot give the plot clearly, since Le Fanu never does.

Essentially the book is less a mystery than a sensation novel such as the works, then popular, of writers like Collins, Reade, Reynolds, and Mrs. Henry Wood. A good sensation novel has much in common with a soap opera: most have more plot than plausibility, and the characters need superhuman stamina: their daily dose of fires, floods, murders, lingering illnesses leading to death, births (legitimate and not), poisonings, passions, and other petrifying events would leave the ordinary human dead of emotional senility by the age of thirty.

In *Checkmate* (whose title is misleading; Le Fanu does nothing with the chess metaphor) we are concerned once again with the recurrent Le Fanu family: here, the Ardens – Sir Reginald, a gouty and extravagant ill-tempered old baronet; his gambling-mad son Richard; his beautiful, innocent, and rather sappy daughter Alice; and also Sir Reginald's brother David, a wealthy benevolent old merchant still concerned with avenging the murder more than twenty years ago of another brother, Henry.

During most of the book the reader is most puzzled by trying to figure out what the mystery of the title is; but the question that has to be solved is what has become of Yelland Mace, one of Henry Arden's murderers. Everyone seems convinced that he has some connection with the rich and sinister Walker Longcluse, an older man who is madly in love with Alice; but everyone who knew Mace says Longcluse does not resemble him. David Arden, after much effort, finds a silhouette of Mace to compare with Longcluse—no resemblance.

Longcluse is present when a Parisian friend of his younger days is killed at a billiards match: the spectators are too distracted by high-stakes betting to notice. (Le Fanu frequently takes us into shady parts of London not frequented by better-known Victorian novelists, but known to his disreputable characters.) Longcluse offers a reward for the detection of the murderer. A shady ex-policeman dismissed from the force for misuse of official information tries to blackmail Longcluse.

As the Arden financial affairs become desperate, Le Fanu repeats a situation he had used in *The Cock and Anchor*: after Sir Reginald's death, Longcluse catches Richard forging Longcluse's name, and makes Richard his tool to force Alice into marriage. Alice escapes at the last moment, and at very long last the reader learns that Longcluse is an illegitimate relative of the Ardens; that he is the Yelland Mace who murdered Henry; and that no one has recognized him because he underwent what must be the first operation in fiction performed by a plastic surgeon to disguise a criminal's identity. Le Fanu, who likes gore, describes the operation with what Symons calls his "characteristic cold gusto." While between crimes, Longcluse has also killed the plastic surgeon, Baron Vanboeren, the man who played Peter Lorre to his Boris Karloff, because the good doctor had kept before and after casts of his patients' faces, and was endeavoring to provide a retirement fund by charging a second fee.

Checkmate is loosely assembled, and a rather perfunctory piece of work. The scenes which Le Fanu had used before in *The Cock and Anchor* are less vivid here, and less fully imagined. But the book is full of the characteristic Le Fanu atmosphere: supernatural portents attend the deaths of the wicked, and many of the characters suffer from very bad dreams indeed. One or two scenes have a fine nightmare quality: Alice is dogged by Longcluse during a performance of Handel's *Saul* in Westminster Abbey, during which the action is matched to the text of the oratorio. But in general the book represents a decay of Le Fanu's powers.

After *Checkmate* two more novels appeared: *The Rose and the Key* (1871), a tale which (like Charles Reade's much better *Hard Cash* of 1863) involves conspiracy to confine a sane person in a private lunatic asylum, appeared in *All the Year Round*, Charles Dickens' former magazine, which also serialized Le Fanu's final novel, *Willing to Die* (1873). After Le Fanu's death a few posthumous collections of his stories, and one of his poems, were published: like most writers of the period, Le Fanu thought a man of letters could write poetry as well as prose.

As a writer he remained something of an amateur, though a very prolific one: like the gentleman-writers of an earlier period, he took few pains over his works, refusing even to read proof and telling his stories without the craftsmanship in construction that his contemporaries in England, the major literary center, were developing. Perhaps Le Fanu suffered from the cultural lag that usually afflicts artists writing in provincial centers. At any rate, a modern reader, accustomed to the fast pace and economical construction of the murder mystery as it has developed since the 1920's may find Le Fanu's works not what he expects. To begin with, Le Fanu thought of the works he was writing as novels, not mysteries, and he uses the various novel conventions which linger on in vestigial form in Doyle's full-length mysteries and in the earlier mysteries of this century: for example, the belief that a love interest is a necessary part of the story. Le Fanu does not use a detective as the central personage of his stories, nor does he confine himself, as a modern mystery writer would, to setting up a problem to be explained; instead he ranges into ghost stories, history, romance, Gothic adventures, and social satire—sometimes all in the same book.

But these defects do not destroy Le Fanu's occasional successes: at his best he continues to be well worth reading. In *Wylder's Hand* the reader can still be fascinated by the various duels of wit which occur between characters, in which one slip on either side may lead to fatal results: Mark Wylder against Stanley Lake, Lake against the solici-

tor Larkin, Lake against his wife, and, finally, Lake against his sister. Tension continually increases: in a sense the whole novel becomes a duel of wits between the reader and the author, as the former seeks to learn what has really happened, and Le Fanu withholds understanding until he is ready for it. And at certain climactic moments Le Fanu manages the effect he desires to produce in the reader—a surprise, even a shock, mingled with a sense of cold horror. Le Fanu does not deserve to be forgotten.

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A RENDELL DOZEN PLUS ONE

By Jo Ann Genaro Vicarel

The novels of Ruth Rendell are among the best mysteries published in recent years. I will attempt to introduce and evaluate her books for those who have never read them and provide some commentary as well for those who already know and admire her work.

AN ANNOTATED CHECKLIST OF THE RENDELL NOVELS THROUGH 1974

From Doon with Death. New York: Doubleday Crime Club, 1964.* Margaret Parsons is found in a field, strangled. As Chief Inspector Wexford and Inspector Mike Burden study her life and background, they find a series of expensive books all inscribed "To Minna from Doon." Who was Doon and what role did he play in Margaret's life? Using the small collection of books as the single outstanding peculiarity in an otherwise dull and meager existence, Wexford builds his case. *From Doon* is nicely constructed–tight, with tidy clueing and compact character building. It's a good first effort, though the ending is a trifle predictable.

*As all U.S. editions are Crime Club, this information will not be repeated. Almost all of the titles have been published in paperback by either Ballantine or Bantam.

To Fear a Painted Devil. 1965. Tamsin Selby gives herself a birthday party and most of the people of Linchester are invited. Tamsin is married to her first cousin, Patrick, who has a knack for antagonizing people. Undercurrents begin to surface at the party and Patrick is stung by wasps while all watch. Next morning he is dead. Then the gossip begins–was he murdered, was he going to divorce Tamsin and marry again, what was in the packet Oliver Gage carried to the Selby house that night? The story is slight and not very suspenseful, although there is a twist or two at the end. Not good Rendell, but second books are usually not as well done as first efforts.

In Sickness and in Health. 1966. Alice Fielding goes to visit her friend Nesta only to find that the address of her new apartment is non-existent and her friend cannot be found. Alice begins questioning those who knew Nesta and soon fears she has been murdered. Then Alice herself gets violently ill–is she being poisoned? This novel has very little suspense and no detection, but there is a marvelous joke at the end of the story and the threads of plot are well tied up. *In Sickness* is a departure from Rendell's usual style and is in no way typical.

A New Lease of Death. 1967. The gloom is heavy here as the Sussex countryside is having a heat wave. The Reverend Mr. Archery is looking into a 16-year-old murder for which a man was tried and hanged. Archery's son wishes to marry the convicted man's daughter, and Archery objects. He goes to Kingsmarkham to see Wexford, who was in charge of the original investigation.

The Reverend gets more than he bargained for, as his basically uninvolved, untouched nature is awakened first by a bad auto accident, then by Imogen Primero and the rest of the individuals he meets. The plot unravels nicely and what was done so long ago is finally laid to rest by all who survived, but each does so in his own way. All in all, this is good book with much promise of things to come. Character development is excellent.

Wolf to the Slaughter. 1968. Rupert Margolis comes to the Kingsmarkham police station to ask where he can get a housekeeper because his sister Ann has gone away without leaving a note. No one pays much attention to him until Wexford receives an anonymous letter stating that a girl called Ann was murdered by Geoff Smith–and on the night Ann Margolis disappeared. The police soon discover Ruby Branch, who cleans people's houses by day and rents one of her rooms by night as a love nest. She confesses to finding blood stains in the room on that same Tuesday night when it had been rented by a Geoff Smith. A most unusual novel: the reader is caught up in the lives of the characters, many of whom are memorable, and the plot is deceptively complex, with a real shocker of an ending. This is Rendell at her best.

The Secret House of Death. 1969. Susan Townsend lives with her young son in the house where she lived as a married woman. Her husband has divorced her to marry the woman with whom he had been having an affair, so it seems natural for Susan to shun the involvement that her neighbors, the Norths, wish her to assume as their own marriage heads toward divorce. But Susan discovers the dead bodies of Louise North and Bernard Heller, her supposed lover, and it looks like murder and suicide, but is it? This is a very good suspense story, low key and controlled, the writing tight and characterization quite solid. There is some good detection here.

The Best Man to Die. 1970. The murdered body of Charlie Hatton is found by Wexford in the Kingsbrook

River; and on the same day Mrs. Fanshawe, an auto accident victim, regains consciousness and tells the police she has no idea who the young girl is who died in that crash with her husband. Thus begins one of Rendell's best, a tale of better-than-average detection and character study. Rendell has a cutting way with words and uses them to advantage here. The solution is perfectly clear and logical, and it is a treat to watch Wexford and Burden reach it.

A Guilty Thing Surprised. 1970. Elizabeth Nightingale is found in Cheriton Forest, bludgeoned to death. Her brother and his wife and her husband are suspected by Wexford of the crime. This is a slight story with a mild twist to the end. There is not a charming or sincere person in the cast.

One Down, Two Across. 1971. Stanley, Vera, and her mother Maud live together, an ill-sorted trio. Stanley hopes to get his hands on Maud's money, Maud hopes to draw Vera away from her husband, and Vera works to keep them all in food and shelter. Coincidence plays a major role as all points converge and Stanley thinks he has it made. Everyone eventually writes a psychological suspense story, and Rendell does very well with hers. Excellent plot and characters, but the ending is no shock.

No More Dying Then. 1972. A boy, five years old, disappears in almost the same place where an eleven-year old girl vanished a few months before. Are the two cases connected, is the same person responsible? Burden finds the body of the girl, murdered. Too much of Burden's sexual frustration almost ruins an otherwise decent mystery.

Murder Being Once Done. 1972. Wexford has had a stroke in his eye and has gone to recuperate in London. He stays with his nephew, who is Superintendent of police in the Kenbourne district, where the body of an unidentified girl is found in a crypt. The story has a double twist ending, and is beautifully plotted and counterplotted. This novel is perhaps her best to date; certainly it is my favorite.

Some Lie and Some Die. 1973. A weekend rock concert at Sundays estate brings to Kingsmarkham 80,000 young people, several rock groups, Zeno Vedast, the current rock idol, and murder. Wexford and Burden are on the scene when the body of a young girl is found in a red dress too small for her. The investigation which looks hopeless at the outset becomes even more so as it continues to lead nowhere, until Wexford manages to fit the pieces together. The ending is good; the guilty are punished in unusual ways. One of Rendell's best, with above average detection.

The Face of Trespass. 1974. Graham Lanceton, author of *The Wine of Astonishment*, has gone to live in Epping Forest to be near Drusilla Janus, a married ingenue eager for "experience." Their affair ends when she asks Gray to commit an act which he cannot bring himself to do. The bulk of the story is taken up with flashbacks of events in the relationship between Gray and Dru and his present way of life, including the death of his mother. Rendell's writing is subtle, so that the story appears, at first glance, to have little suspense and no mystery. It is not fare for the lover of thrillers but is recommended to those looking for a well written story, with a deft touch of anticipation. It's a slow starter, low-keyed, but the last pages pack a wallop.

In *From Doon With Death* in 1964, Ruth Rendell not only published the first of a fine series of mystery/detective novels, she also created one of the major police characters in the last decade in Chief Inspector Wexford. Rendell has also brought to detective fiction a freshness of approach, a shrewd and penetrating power of description that is sometimes caustic, sometimes sympathetic. She can write very well, and each of her dozen or so titles is worth attention; more than a few come near to greatness.

The novels are in two categories: suspense stories and the Chief Inspector Wexford series. The suspense novels deal variously with obsession. In *One Down, Two Across* Stanley is obsessed with crossword puzzles and the desire to obtain his mother-in-law's money. *The Face of Trespass* deals with the absolute obsession of a young man by his desire for a woman. Total possession of one by another is again the prime mover in *Secret House of Death;* Alice Fielding is dominated by her long-kept secret in *In Sickness and In Health*, and money is the motivator in *To Fear a Painted Devil.*

One Down, Two Across and *The Face of Trespass* are excellent examples of psychological suspense. There is an inevitability about the outcome of *One Down*—the characters moving toward an almost predestined fate; this inevitability is lacking in *Face*—which meanders along toward an unexpected stroke of fortune. Rendell very effectively uses key narrative in these works.

Of the remaining three suspense titles, *To Fear a Painted Devil* and *In Sickness and In Health* are relatively minor works that carry a surprise or two and are written in a competent and quite readable style. *The Secret House of Death* is a gem by anyone's standards. At first glance it is ladies' suspense or worse, but it turns out to be a finely plotted, ably clued murder mystery, complete with excellent detective work.

The Wexford books are by far the best of Rendell's work and should be read by all. The series is dominated by the Chief Inspector, but in the handling of character development, plot construction, and sheer good storytelling, Rendell moves beyond the standard police procedural format. Obsession is again a major theme and generally revolves around the relationship of one individual with another. The deaths are personal killings usually committed in passion; the murderers are not of the master criminal variety.

The series takes place in and around the Kingsmarkham district in the heart of Sussex farm country. The police station is new and ultramodern, white and square, a rather incongruous edifice among ancient elms and Regency houses.

Chief Inspector Wexford, the focal point, is the intelligent one, the solver of murder cases, the shrewd student of human nature. When first we meet him in *From Doon With Death*, he is fifty-two, tall, thickset but not fat; in *Wolf to the Slaughter*, he has little eyes the "colour of cut flints" (p. 19) and is now corpulent and heavy with an ugly face equipped with a snub nose and wide mouth, dressed in a much worn gray, double-breasted suit. The same suit shows up in *A New Lease of Death.* We are told that his skin is "pachydermatous, wrinkled and grey, and his three-cornered ears stuck out absurdly under the sparse fringe of colourless hair" (*The Best Man To Die,* p. 17); he is almost totally bald in *Some Lie and Some Die.* He has hypertension and is taking medicine prescribed by his life-long friend Dr. Crocker. Wexford has had a stroke in his eye just prior to the events in *Murder Being Once Done,* the only book in the series through 1974 which does not take place in Kingsmarkham.

Wexford was born in Pomfret and has lived almost all of his life in the farming district of Sussex. His speech is somewnat old-fashioned and he has a Sussex accent. We learn that Wexford's first name is Reginald in *A Guilty Thing Surprised,* but very few people know and even fewer are permitted to address him by it. He is tolerant of everything but intolerance and is seldom shocked by human foibles. He has a reputation as an "investigator into quirks of character." (*Murder Being Once Done*)

Wexford is married to an attractive woman of few words and has two daughters, Sylvia, who is married and the mother of a son, and Sheila, the beauty, who looks so much like her father. His nephew, Howard Fortune, is a CID Superintendent in the Kenbourne district of London.

Wexford never discusses his cases at home but hears a vital clue there in the *Best Man to Die.* He expects his nephew to discuss his cases with him, as one policeman to another, but Wexford would never hash out a delicate point with his wife, as this does not fit with his idea of professionalism. He does discuss the cases with Mike Burden, his Inspector, and drops in at the Burden house for a chat or buys him a drink at the Olive and Dove after work when he wishes to review an investigation. We see him actively seeking out gossip only once when he visits Lionel Marriott for the sole purpose of hearing about the murdered woman's private life and her relationships with her husband and brother. (*A Guilty Thing Surprised*)

Personal feelings must never enter an investigation; when a young member of his CID staff gets emotionally involved with a girl in a case, Wexford quietly warns him away, and when that fails, the young man is expected to resign. Burden begins an affair with the mother of a missing child (*No More Dying Then*); when it is reported to Wexford, he does not want to hear about it. If he does not know, he will not be forced to act. His standards are very high and apply to everyone under his command,

but he is also a man of compassion.

A great reader, Wexford sometimes quotes from literature or makes a literary allusion which generally goes over the heads of his colleagues, especially that of Mike Burden. His nephew can equal Wexford's literary knowledge and they spend several evenings discussing literary matters in *Murder Being Once Done.*

Inspector Mike Burden is the perfect foil for Wexford's tolerant sophistication. Straightlaced, often mealy-mouthed, prejudiced, intolerant of everything deviating from what he considers normal and proper, Burden sorely tries Wexford's patience on a number of occasions, the most serious being his omitting to make a report in *No More Dying Then.* Burden's wife Jean dies a few months before the events in that book and he reacts fully in character, enclosing himself in a shell of self-pity, neglecting his children, and being short-tempered and intolerant of the world around him.

Burden has a daughter Pat and a son John, whom we generally see in minor roles in the series. He has a sister-in-law, Grace, who comes to help after Jean's death and whom he subsequently treats rather shabbily.

We are told that Burden has an excellent memory (*No More Dying Then*), hates rock musicians and non-conforming young people (*Some Lie and Some Die*), does no reading (*From Doon With Death* and *No More Dying Then*), and likes everything to be neat and orderly (*A Guilty Thing Surprised*).

Mrs. Rendell has good descriptive ability and uses it to its fullest. An entire life is painted in a few sentences; a country scene perfectly detailed; young people portrayed at a rock concert sensitively and with some compassion; ghoulish sightseekers at the murder scene are well characterized by the modern fascination for violent death; and the mother of a murdered girl dwells graphically on the horror of her daughter's injuries. We see nuances of character as more and more is revealed indirectly, as, for example, when Wexford visits the statue of Sir Thomas More in London and realizes that More and Dr. Crocker bear a strong resemblance to each other (*Murder Being Once Done*).

Continued on page 235

LADY IN A STRAIGHTJACKET

By Frank D. McSherry, Jr.

One of the most curious literary forms ever attempted appeared in– and, as far as I know, only in–the mystery field, nearly thirty years ago.

Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine has been the world's leading mystery magazine for so long that it is hard to recall that it once had a rival for attractively-presented, high quality detective stories. *Mystery Book Magazine*, which first appeared July 1945, was a digest-size, 130-page monthly magazine printing largely the longer stories– novels and novellas–that EQMM almost never used. It was no mere carbon copy of EQMM, either; among other differing touches it used illustrations, well done in the first four issues by book jacket artist H. Lawrence Hoffman and even better done in the next sixteen by pulp illustrator L. Sterne Stevens ("Lawrence"). Each story had not only a full-size illustration, full-page or better, but also a separate miniature illustration for each chapter heading.

Its feature stories included works by major authors, as evident from Robert E. Briney's index to the magazine in Volume 8 Number 4 (page 245) of *The Armchair Detective*. Almost all of these long stories later appeared, usually expanded, in hard covers. The entire magazine had that indefinable touch of class for which there is no easy formula.

Contributing to its impression of originality was a regular feature that was, as far as I know, absolutely unique–a combination of the short-short story with the crossword puzzle. Words were left blank in the story and solution of the mystery required solution of the puzzle. "And if you solvers have followed Inspector Cross across and down, you have also solved the puzzle of the grinning skull and the mystery of the hidden (35D)."[1]

The double theme was further carried out in the departments illustrations, in each of which the blank crossword puzzle formed part of the drawing, which in turn always depicted the title object. For example, "The Poisoned Cigarette" had a drawing of a cigarette package, with the puzzle where the label ought to be.[2]

Twenty-one of these short-shorts appeared, all featuring Inspector Cross and all written by Margaret Petherbridge, who was editor of the *New York Times Sunday Magazine* crossword page and co-editor of the *Crossworld Puzzle Book* series for some twenty years.

Did this unusual experiment succeed, either as fiction, crossword puzzle, or combination? I'm no crossword puzzle expert, so I'll have to duck that part of the question; but I doubt if more than about a quarter of these stories would ever have been published on their own as fiction, without the added crossword. Some of this at least is the fault of the form and not Miss Petherbridge.

The necessity of using words that made the crossword come out right often forced Miss Petherbridge into a stylistic strait jacket, producing such awkward sentences as, "She began to ramp up and down and soon worked herself into hysterics";[3] "Cross began to realize he had seldom tackled a snaggier problem."[4] Or the words of an angry man with too much to drink, protesting that the police have not made a thorough investigation of the murder of his daughter: " 'Listen, amigo,' he rumbled. 'Let me elucidate. You are a fool. I iterate–like all policemen I have had anything to do with–you are an ass. And like that quadruped, you have six gaits, every one of them as slow as a snail's . . . maybe if you threatened that bull-headed little Egyptian with your gat, he might confess.' "[5]

The cramping restrictions of the form–and perhaps the length as well–may help explain why Cross's solutions so often depend so heavily on sheer coincidence and luck: Cross is able to solve several cases simply because by a lucky accident he happens to overhear a guilty pair discussing their crime. Sometimes the guilty party decides to confess for no particular reason (except, perhaps, that the end of the allotted length was fast approaching); and once, when Cross falsely accused an innocent person to pry a confession out of a guilty one, we are told that "This was not idle speculation on the Inspector's part. He knew what he was doing."[6] But we are never told how he knew. (On the other hand, as the solution involved a tattoo on a part of a charming young lady's anatomy usually covered by clothing, perhaps we shouldn't ask.)

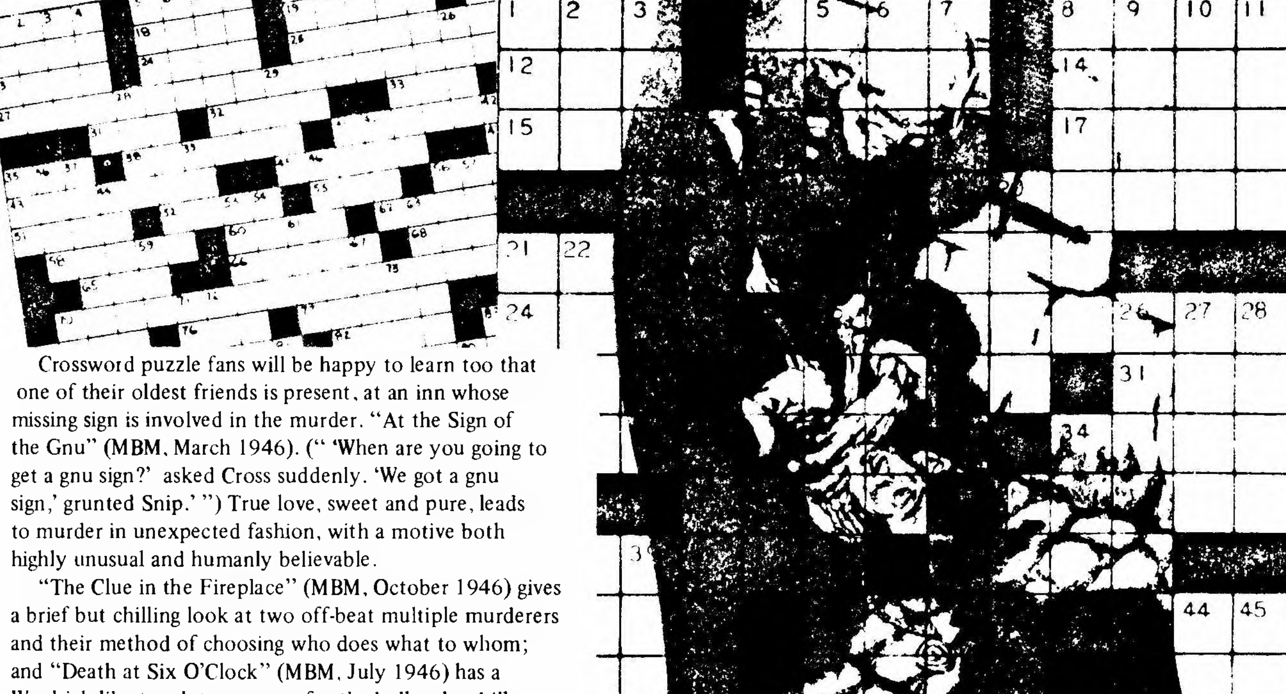
Still, there are some good things in the stories, revealing their author's alert and ingenious mind. In "Ace of Spades Mystery" (MBM, December 1945), perhaps the best of the series, a man's high standards of excellence in his profession lead him to betray himself as a murderer. The concept used is so human that one wishes Miss Petherbridge had developed it in a straight story without the crossword puzzle. (The same concept was used later, in a different and equally original manner, by Anthony Boucher in a better-written short-short, "A Matter of Scholarship," in EQMM for April 1955.)

"Murder in Chapter One" involves a mystery novelist who made a doll of each young lady who had become his amorous conquest–dolls with easily recognizable faces. Need

you ask whose bullet-punctured corpse is found slumped over the typewriter in his study? (MBM, April 1946)

"Murder by Lamplight" (MBM, January 1947) is a dying message story which delivers a strong punch despite several flaws–for example, the victim dies of prussic acid, which usually kills so fast that I doubt if she would have had time to leave any message. The murderer's name, left blank, is the last word in the story; to identify the killer the crossword puzzle must be worked.

The May 1947 issue was the nineteenth and last of the digest-size *Mystery Book*. With its next issue, Spring 1948, it appeared in pulp size with 196 pages, and as a quarterly. Though it kept using fine longer stories by name writers and its characteristic miniature illustrations for chapter headings, Lawrence was gone, replaced by the competent but uninspiring Paul Orban; and, after two of the pulp size issues, so was Miss Petherbridge. And with them, somehow, had gone a subtle but definite touch of class.



Crossword puzzle fans will be happy to learn too that one of their oldest friends is present, at an inn whose missing sign is involved in the murder. "At the Sign of the Gnu" (MBM, March 1946). (" 'When are you going to get a gnu sign?' asked Cross suddenly. 'We got a gnu sign,' grunted Snip.' ") True love, sweet and pure, leads to murder in unexpected fashion, with a motive both highly unusual and humanly believable.

"The Clue in the Fireplace" (MBM, October 1946) gives a brief but chilling look at two off-beat multiple murderers and their method of choosing who does what to whom; and "Death at Six O'Clock" (MBM, July 1946) has a Woolrich-like touch to account for the bullet that kills a famous dancer and goes on to smash a clock half an hour before the time of death.

Still, the average quality of these stories, even the good ones listed here by title, is low; and while the good ones are readable and saleable, I doubt if *Mystery Book Magazine* would have bought them without the puzzle gimmick attached. Still, they seem to have been popular: Miss Petherbridge's name appears on the front covers of eleven issues, usually along with the title of that issue's puzzle-mystery tale.

How did Miss Petherbridge's experiments in the mystery form succeed on their own terms, as a new variant, part crossword puzzle, part detective story, neither the one or the other but something new and different? Well, I hate to put in a cross word, but. . . .

I feel the combination suffers from being one: the concentration needed to solve the one interferes with the reader's appreciation of the other. It tries to do and be two different things at the same time, a task that is hard and confusing for both author and reader. Miss Petherbridge's experiment, though it has its moments, is a literary curiosity rather than a viable literary form.

[1]"Crime at the Crosswords or The Grinning Skull Mystery," by Margaret Petherbridge, *Mystery Book Magazine*, July 1945, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 69.

[2]"Ace of Spades Mystery," by Margaret Petherbridge, *Mystery Book Magazine*, December 1945, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 90. I understand from Prof. Edward Lauterbach that there is an earlier use of this concept. The black squares of the first crossword puzzle in Vincent Fuller's *The Long Green Gaze*, 1925, facing page 46, form a crude skull and crossbones; and the black squares in the first Miss Petherbridge puzzle form the eyeholes, nose, and teeth of a skull, in "Crime at the Crosswords" (MBM, July 1945).

[3]"Ace of Spades Mystery," by Margaret Petherbridge, *Mystery Book Magazine*, December 1945, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 90.

[4]"Crime at the Crosswords," op. cit., p. 68.

[5]"Murder by Lamplight," by Margaret Petherbridge, *Mystery Book Magazine*, January 1947, No. 17, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 124.

[6]"The Coat of Arms Mystery," by Margaret Petherbridge, *Mystery Book Magazine*, November 1945, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 80.

WHAT THE WORLD WAITED FOR

By Charles Shibuk and Marvin Lachman

One of the most frequently-voiced wishes that we've noted in TAD is that Howard Haycraft would update his *Murder for Pleasure* (1941). Another great need is the updating of the "Haycraft-Queen Definitive Library of Detective-Crime-Mystery Fiction," which terminated in 1948.

We have made bold to tackle the latter need. We prepared a list of our own selections and then solicited the opinions of a number of other knowledgeable people in order to insure the most widespread coverage. While we don't pretend to offer a "definitive" listing, we do believe that we have many excellent suggestions to offer for your reading enjoyment from among the many novels and short story volumes published since 1949. We would not be surprised to find that any possible future Haycraft-Queen list would incorporate many of our titles.

The compilation of a checklist of this nature does present a few problems. None of the individuals involved in this project claims to have read a major share of the material published since 1949. There may very well be deserving books that none of us has read, especially among British titles that were never published in this country.

In compiling this checklist we have used only one criterion for nomination of any title, and that is excellence.

We wish to thank Robert Aucott, Jon L. Breen, Francis M. Nevins, and John Nieminski for their contributions to this project. Since this list represents a wide diversity of opinion among its collaborators, it was deemed politic to include the initials of the selector(s) of every volume cited.

And now, at long last. . . .

THE AUCOTT-BREEN-LACHMAN-NEVINS-NIEMINSKI-SHIBUK INDEFINITE LIBRARY OF DETECTIVE-CRIME-MYSTERY FICTION SINCE 1949

Author	Title	Selector(s)
	1949	
Roger Bax	Two If By Sea *G.B.:* Came the Dawn	R.A.
John & Emery Bonett	Dead Lion	M.L.
Fredric Brown	The Screaming Mimi	R.A.
John Dickson Carr	Below Suspicion	R.A.
Elizabeth Daly	And Dangerous to Know	R.A., C.S.
John Evans	Halo in Brass	R.A., M.L.
William Faulkner	Knight's Gambit (ss)	R.A.
Brett Halliday	A Taste of Violence	C.S.
Cyril Hare	The Wind Blows Death *G.B.:* When the Wind Blows	R.A., C.S.
Jack Iams	Death Draws the Line	C.S.
Selwyn Jepson	The Golden Dart	R.A.
Ross Macdonald	The Moving Target	R.A.
Max Murray	The Queen and the Corpse *G.B.:* No Duty on a Corpse	R.A.
Ellery Queen	Cat of Many Tails	R.A., J.B., M.L., C.S., F.N., J.N.
Georges Simenon	Maigret's First Case	J.N.
Rex Stout	Trouble in Triplicate (ss)	C.S.
Josephine Tey	Brat Farrar	R.A., C.S.
Robert Van Gulik, trans.	Dee Goong An	C.S.
	1950	
Fredric Brown	1. Compliments of a Fiend 2. Night of the Jabberwock	R.A. R.A., J.B.
John Dickson Carr	The Bride of Newgate	R.A.
Raymond Chandler	The Simple Art of Murder (ss)	F.N.
Agatha Christie	A Murder Is Announced	M.L.
Edmund Crispin	Frequent Hearses	R.A., C.S.
Elizabeth Daly	Death and Letters	R.A.
Ian Fleming	Casino Royale	J.N.
Michael Gilbert	Smallbone Deceased	M.L., R.A., C.S.
Ross Macdonald	The Drowning Pool	R.A., M.L.
Rex Stout	In the Best Families	C.S.
Arthur Upfield	The Widows of Broome	R.A.
William Wiegand	At Last, Mr. Tolliver	R.A.
	1951	
Eric Ambler	Judgment on Deltchev	R.A.
John & Emery Bonett	Not in the Script *G.B.:* A Banner for Pegasus	C.S.
Fredric Brown	The Far Cry	R.A., M.L.
John Dickson Carr	The Devil in Velvet	R.A.
Elizabeth Daly	The Book of the Crime	R.A.
Edmund Crispin	The Long Divorce	R.A.
Andrew Garve	By-Line for Murder *G.B.:* Press of Suspects	R.A.
Michael Gilbert	Death Has Deep Roots	R.A., M.L.
Cyril Hare	An English Murder	R.A., C.S.
Geoffrey Household	A Time to Kill	R.A.
Michael Innes	The Paper Thunderbolt *G.B.:* Operation Pax	R.A.
Selwyn Jepson	Man Dead	R.A.
Julian Symons	The 31st of February	M.L.
Josephine Tey	The Daughter of Time	R.A., J.B., M.L., J.N.

1952

Author	Title	Selector(s)
Margery Allingham	The Tiger in the Smoke	R.A., J.B., M.L., C.S.
Margot Bennett	The Widow of Bath	R.A.
John Bingham	My Name is Michael Sibley	R.A.
Herbert Brean	The Clock Strikes 13	C.S.
Fredric Brown	The Deep End	R.A.
Glyn Carr	The Corpse in the Crevasse	C.S.
Henry Cecil	No Bail for the Judge	R.A.
Lord Dunsany	The Little Tales of Smethers and Other Stories (ss)	C.S.
Andrew Garve	A Hole in the Ground	C.S.
Michael Gilbert	Death in Captivity	C.S.
Frederick Knott	Dial "M" for Murder (play)	R.A.
Margaret Millar	Vanish in an Instant	M.L.
Ellery Queen	The King Is Dead	R.A.
Patrick Quentin	Black Widow	J.B., C.S.
C. E. Vulliamy	Don Among the Dead Men	J.N., C.S.
Hillary Waugh	Last Seen Wearing	R.A., M.L.

1953

Author	Title	Selector(s)
Eric Ambler	The Schirmer Inheritance	R.A.
Josephine Bell	Bones in the Barrow	R.A.
Nicholas Blake	The Dreadful Hollow	R.A.
Raymond Chandler	The Long Goodbye	R.A., J.B., F.N., C.S.
Edmund Crispin	Beware of the Trains (ss)	J.B., C.S.
Guy Cullingford	Post Mortem	J.B.
Roald Dahl	Someone Like You (ss)	J.B., M.L.
Michael Innes	Christmas at Candleshoe	R.A.
Ira Levin	A Kiss Before Dying	R.A., J.B., M.L., F.N., J.N.
Ross Macdonald	Meet Me at the Morgue	R.A.
Shelley Smith	An Afternoon to Kill	R.A.
Henry Wade	Too Soon to Die	C.S.

1954

Author	Title	Selector(s)
David Alexander	Terror on Broadway	J.N.
Isaac Asimov	The Caves of Steel	J.B.
Nicholas Blake	The Whisper in the Gloom	R.A.
Howard Browne	Thin Air	J.A.
Henry Cecil	According to the Evidence	R.A.
Ian Fleming	Live and Let Die	R.A.
Marian Mainwaring	Murder in Pastiche	R.A., J.B.
Ellery Queen	The Glass Village	F.N.
Patrick Quentin	My Son, the Murderer	C.S.
Howard Rigsby	Lucinda	R.A., C.S.
Julian Symons	The Narrowing Circle	J.B.
Arthur Upfield	Death of a Lake	R.A., C.S.
Roy Vickers	Eight Murders in the Suburbs (ss)	M.L., C.S.
Barbara Worsley-Gough	Alibi Innings	R.A., C.S.

1955

Author	Title	Selector(s)
Margot Bennett	The Man Who Didn't Fly	R.A.
Christianna Brand	Tour De Force	R.A., C.S.
Fredric Brown	The Wench Is Dead	M.L., C.S.
Harold R. Daniels	In His Blood	M.L.
Michael Gilbert	The Country-House Burglar *G.B.:* Sky HIgh	R.A.
Donald Hamilton	Line of Fire	C.S.
Geoffrey Household	Fellow Passenger	R.A.
Michael Innes	The Man from the Sea	R.A.
Ed Lacy	The Best That Ever Did It	M.L.
Philip MacDonald	Guest in the House	R.A., C.S.
Ngaio Marsh	Scales of Justice	R.A., C.S.
Margaret Millar	Beast in View	M.L.
Gladys Mitchell	Watson's Choice	R.A.
Thomas Sterling	Evil of the Day	R.A.
Henry Wade	A Dying Fall	R.A., M.L., C.S.
Charles Williams	Scorpion Reef	M.L.

1956

Author	Title	Selector(s)
Josephine Bell	Death in Retirement	R.A.
Pierre Boileau & Thomas Narcejac	The Living and the Dead	R.A.
Fredric Brown	The Lenient Beast	R.A., M.L., J.N.
John Dickson Carr	Patrick Butler for the Defense	M.L.
Stanley Ellin	Mystery Stories (ss)	R.A., J.B., M.L., F.N.
E. X. Ferrars	Always Say Die	R.A.
Edward Grierson	The Second Man	R.A.
Ed McBain	Cop Hater	J.B.
Ngaio Marsh	Death of a Fool *G.B.:* Off With His Head	R.A.
Maurice Procter	The Pub Crawler	R.A.

Author	Title	Selector(s)
	1957	
Charlotte Armstrong	The Albatross (ss)	J.B., M.L.
Isaac Asimov	The Naked Sun	J.B.
Nicholas Blake	End of Chapter	R.A.
Howard Browne	The Taste of Ashes	J.B., C.S.
W. R. Burnett	Underdog	C.S.
Ian Fleming	From Russia, With Love	R.A.
Joan Fleming	You Can't Believe Your Eyes	R.A.
Erle Stanley Gardner	The Case of the Lucky Loser	F.N.
William Campbell Gault	The Convertible Hearse	M.L.
Andrew Garve	The Galloway Case	R.A.
	1957 cont.	
Patricia Highsmith	Deep Water *G.B.:* Mask of Innocence	R.A.
Chester Himes	For Love of Imabelle	J.B.
Selwyn Jepson	A Noise in the Night	C.S.
Ed Lacy	Room to Swing	J.B., M.L.
William P. McGivern	Odds Against Tomorrow	M.L.
J. J. Marric	Gideon's Night	J.N.
Evelyn Piper	Bunny Lake Is Missing	J.B., M.L.
Maurice Procter	The Midnight Plumber	M.L.
Julian Symons	The Colour of Murder	R.A., M.L.
Henry Wade	The Litmore Snatch	R.A.
	1958	
Margery Allingham	Tether's End *G.B.:* Hide My Eyes	R.A., J.N.
Margot Bennett	Someone from the Past	R.A.
Fredric Brown	The Office	C.S.
Jocelyn Davey	The Naked Villainy	R.A.
Stanley Ellin	The Eighth Circle	J.B.
Erle Stanley Gardner	The Case of the Foot-Loose Doll	F.N.
William Haggard	The Telemann Touch	R.A.
Bruce Hamilton	Too Much of Water	C.S.
Michael Innes	The Long Farewell	R.A.
Baynard Kendrick	Clear and Present Danger	C.S.
Ed McBain	Lady Killer	R.A.
Gladys Mitchell	Spotted Hemlock	R.A.
Ellery Queen	The Finishing Stroke	J.B., J.N.
	1959	
Eric Ambler	Passage of Arms	R.A.
Ben Benson	The End of Violence	M.L.
Robert Bloch	Psycho	J.B.
Richard Condon	The Manchurian Candidate	J.N.
Doris Miles Disney	No Next of Kin	M.L.
Ian Fleming	Goldfinger	J.B.
Paul Gallico	Too Many Ghosts	R.A.
Andrew Garve	A Hero for Leanda	R.A.
Cyril Hare	The Best Detective Stories of Cyril Hare (ss)	C.S.
Bert & Dolores Hitchens	The Man Who Followed Women	M.L.
Philip MacDonald	The List of Adrian Messenger	J.N.
Ngaio Marsh	False Scent	R.A.
Patricia Moyes	Dead Men Don't Ski	M.L., C.S.
	1960	
Henry Cecil	Alibi for a Judge	R.A.
Lionel Davidson	Night of Wencelas	R.A.
Donald Hamilton	Death of a Citizen	J.B.
Geoffrey Household	Watcher in the Shadows	R.A., J.N., C.S.
Ed McBain	The Heckler	M.L.
John D. MacDonald	The Only Girl in the Game	J.B., C.S.
Margaret Millar	A Stranger in My Grave	M.L.
C. P. Snow	The Affair	J.B.
Charles Williams	The Sailcloth Shroud	M.L.
	1961	
Leo Bruce	A Bone and a Hank of Hair	C.S.
Agatha Christie	The Pale Horse	M.L.
Olivia Dwight	Close His Eyes	R.A.
Val Gielgud	And Died So?	R.A.
The Gordons	Operation Terror	M.L.
Russell Kirk	The Old House of Fear	J.N.
Emma Lathen	Banking on Death	R.A., M.L.
J. J. Marric	Gideon's Fire	M.L.
Patrick Quentin	The Ordeal of Mrs. Snow (ss)	J.B., M.L., C.S.
Hillary Waugh	That Night It Rained	R.A.
	1962	
Jeffrey Ashford	Burden of Proof	M.L.
Leo Bruce	Nothing Like Blood	R.A.
Agatha Christie	The Mirror Crack'd	M.L., C.S.
Joan Fleming	When I Grow Rich	R.A.
Charles Forsyte	Dive Into Danger *G.B.:* Diving Death	R.A.
Dick Francis	Dead Cert	R.A.
John D. MacDonald	A Flash of Green	C.S.
Dan J. Marlowe	The Name of the Game Is Death	M.L.
J. J. Marric	Gideon's March	M.L.
	1963	
John Fowles	The Collector	J.N.
Dorothy B. Hughes	The Expendable Man	C.S.
John Le Carre	The Spy Who Came In From the Cold	J.B., F.N.
Gavin Lyall	The Most Dangerous Game	R.A.

Patricia Moyes	Murder A La Mode	R.A.
Hillary Waugh	Prisoner's Plea	R.A.

1964

Dick Francis	Nerve	R.A., J.B., M.L.
John Gardner	The Liquidator	R.A.
William Haggard	The Antagonists	C.S.
Harry Kemelman	Friday the Rabbi Slept Late	R.A., J.B., M.L.
Hans Helmut Kirst	The Night of the Generals	J.B.
Emma Lathen	Accounting for Murder	J.B.
John D. MacDonald	The Deep Blue Goodbye	J.B., M.L.
John D. MacDonald	Nightmare in Pink	J.N.
Ross Macdonald	The Chill	M.L.
Patricia Moyes	Falling Star	C.S.
Joyce Porter	Dover One	J.B., J.N.
Maurice Procter	Two Men in Twenty	C.S.
Ruth Rendell	From Doon with Death	M.L.
James Hall Roberts	The Q Document	J.N.

1965

John Ball	In the Heat of the Night	J.B., M.L.
Dick Francis	Odds Against	M.L., C.S.
Dick Francis	For Kicks	M.L.
Ron Goulart, ed.	The Hardboiled Dicks (ss)	F.N.
Adam Hall	The Quiller Memorandum *G.B.:* The Berlin Memorandum	C.S.
Joseph Harrington	The Last Known Address	R.A.
Roderic Jeffries	Dead Against the Lawyers	C.S.
Helen McCloy	The Singing Diamonds (ss)	J.B., M.L.
Patricia Moyes	Johnny Underground	J.B.
Gerald Sinstadt	The Fidelio Score	M.L.
Maj Sjowall & Per Wahloo	Roseanna	F.N.
Rex Stout	The Doorbell Rang	J.N.

1966

Henry Cecil	The Asking Price	R.A.
Thomas B. Dewey	Deadline	C.S.
Robert L. Fish	The Incredible Schlock Homes (ss)	M.L.
Dashiell Hammett	The Big Knockover (ss)	F.N.
Ross Macdonald	Black Money	J.B.

1967

George Baxt	A Parade of Cockeyed Creatures	J.N.
Agatha Christie	Endless Night	R.A.
Dick Francis	Blood Sport	M.L.
Randell Garrett	Too Many Magicians	J.B.
Michael Gilbert	Game Without Rules (ss)	M.L.
Harry Kemelman	The Nine Mile Walk (ss)	R.A., M.L., C.S.
Emma Lathen	Murder Against the Grain	M.L.
Ira Levin	Rosemary's Baby	J.B., J.N.
John D. MacDonald	The Last One Left	R.A.

1968

William Arden	A Dark Power	F.N.
Isaac Asimov	Asimov's Mysteries (ss)	R.A.
Andrew Garve	The Ascent of D-13	C.S.
Selwyn Jepson	The Angry Millionaire	R.A.
Emma Lathen	Come to Dust	M.L.
Ross Macdonald	The Instant Enemy	C.S.

1969

Steve Fisher	Saxon's Ghost	J.N.
John Alexander Graham	Arthur	R.A.
Naomi Hintze	You'll Like My Mother *G.B.:* The House With the Watching Eyes	M.L.
Emma Lathen	When in Greece	M.L.
Richard Stark	The Sour Lemon Score	J.N.
Simon Troy	Swift to Its Close	R.A.

Author	Title	Selector(s)

1970

Catherine Aird	A Late Phoenix	M.L.
Tucker Coe	Wax Apple	F.N.
Michael Delving	Die Like a Man	J.N.
Jack Finney	Time and Again	R.A., J.B., C.S.
Joseph Hansen	Fadeout	F.N.
Peter Lovesey	Wobble to Death	J.B., M.L.
Anthony Shaffer	Sleuth (play)	M.L.
Maj Sjöwall & Per Wahlöö	The Laughing Policeman	J.N., F.N.
Donald Westlake	Hot Rock	M.L.

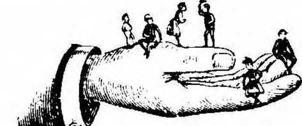
1971

Tony Hillerman	The Fly on the Wall	M.L., F.N.
Edward D. Hoch	The Spy and the Thief (ss)	J.B.
P. D. James	Shroud for a Nightingale	C.S., F.N.
Ross Macdonald	The Underground Man	F.N.
Cornell Woolrich	Nightwebs (ss)	M.L., F.N., J.N.

1972

Oliver Bleeck	The Procane Chronicle	F.N.
Stanley Ellin	Mirror, Mirror on the Wall	F.N.
Michael Gilbert	The Body of a Girl	C.S.
P. D. James	An Unsuitable Job for A Woman	J.B.

Emma Lathen	Murder Without Icing	J.N.
	1973	
John Cashman	The Gentleman from Chicago	J.N.
Hugh Greene, ed.	The Further Rivals of Sherlock Holmes (ss)	C.S.
	1974	
John Gardner	The Return of Moriarty	C.S.
	1975	
Agatha Christie	Curtain	C.S., M.L.



BOUCHERCON

Bouchercon returns to the West Coast this year, with *Bouchercon 7* scheduled for October 1-3 at the Americana Hotel, Culver City, California.

Len and June Moffat, who co-chair the event, promise a varied, highly entertaining program. Novelist John Ball, as guest of honor, will moderate a panel on the Police Procedural. Panelists will include other mystery story writers and at least one representative of the Los Angeles Police Department, Investigator Timothy Yost, who was LAPD's 1975 Policeman of the Year. Yost was instrumental in capturing the robbers who, in April this year, stole John Ball's collection of jade, and in recovering most of the pieces.

Larry Shaw will conduct a Sherlockian panel, and Noreen Shaw will head a panel on the late Frederic Brown. Among Noreen's panelists is Robert Bloch. James White, the criminalist (and one of Anthony Boucher's sons), will present a slide show and talk. He hopes to bring with him, from the Orange County Sheriff's Department, Mary H. Graves, toxicologist and serologist, and John L. Ragle, fingerprint expert, for discussions of their specialties. Ragle is the man who cracked the DePalma case—in which an innocent man was convicted because of a forged fingerprint. Ragle proved the print was a forgery, and DePalma was eventually declared innocent and freed.

The three-day event, to which all mystery/detective/suspense/crime-fiction buffs are invited, will open at 5 p.m., Friday, October 1, with registration. Saturday will be a full day from 10 a.m. to an after-dinner movie. The highlight of Sunday's program will be a luncheon address by John Ball.

Membership fees for *Bouchercon 7* are $4 per person until August 1, $6 after that date. Make checks payable to *Bouchercon 7* and send to Box 4456, Downey, California 90241.

CRIME WRITERS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

By Daniel P. King

Anyone who says that crime doesn't pay was not in London, England, in October for the 1st International Crime Writers Conference. Sixty American crime writers came, and were joined by British and Europeans who earn their living writing about lawbreakers.

Conference Director Penelope Wallace, daughter of novelist Edgar Wallace, put together a unique event in the history of crime writing which included a river trip along the Thames waterfront (with a commentary enroute by the London River Police), visits to London police stations, and a first-time-ever demonstration to a non-police audience of the Metropolitan Police Special Dog Squad.

Prof. H. J. Eysenck of London University spoke on criminality and personality; locks and lock-picking was the topic of a representative of the International Chubb & Son Lock & Safe Co.; and Attorney Michael Underwood told of the work of the Director of Public Prosecutions (the English equivalent of the District Attorney's office).

John A. Mack of the University of Glasgow discussed international crime in real life. ("Crime is tertiary employment—much like teaching, social work and other service occupations.")

Firearms in crime was the topic of D. J. Penn of the Imperial War Museum. Guns are increasingly being used in crime in England despite over 50 years of strict controls. Criminals may purchase handguns easily (usual price: $200.00) or may rent them for a specific job ($20.00 plus a refundable $80.00 deposit).

Other discussions of crime and writing techniques were presented by experts, and further lines of inquiry were conducted by Sir Robert Mark, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police and Lord Goodman of the Arts Council.

The Crime Writers Association, sponsor of the Conference, was founded in 1953 by a dozen crime writers meeting at the National Liberal Club in London. Its membership of 400 from around the world includes fiction writers, lawyers, police officials and journalists.

THE PAPERBACK REVOLUTION

By Charles Shibuk

With the summer reading season full upon us, we can offer the reader a fairly decent crop of mystery novels that combine the classic with a generous supply of the current – thus appealing to all tastes.

On the other hand, I regret to report that the recent riotous profusion of short story volumes has come to an abrupt and unwelcome halt with only one borderline collection to offer at this time. As a parenthetical note, I might mention that The Mysterious Press, a rising, new quality publisher devoted to the short form, had originally sought to issue its collections in simultaneous hard and soft cover editions, but severe economic exigencies militated against this plan and the latter format had to be abandoned. Hopefully, forward-looking paperback publishers will examine these forthcoming volumes–and other worthy collections–with a view to future republication.

ERIC AMBLER

Doctor Frigo (1974) (Bantam) is a medical man who just wants to get on with his life and job. Unfortunately, his father had been the leader of a political faction in a Central American country whose promising career was cut short by assassination. Sinister forces currently planning to assume power determine to avail themselves of the doctor's prestige and cooperation. This novel of intrique starts slowly but builds steadily to its climax, and is a serious and sober effort not seriously marred by its regrettable attempts at humor.

JOHN DICKSON CARR

A shot is fired at midnight, and a girl, all alone in her room, apparently dies of fright. There's also a face that appears at windows 16 feet above the ground. This is obviously a case for that erudite expounder of impossible crimes, Dr. Gideon Fell. Join him in the eerie *He Who Whispers* (1946) (Award), a major and underreprinted problem in deduction from an extremely talented author.

AGATHA CHRISTIE

Pocket Books does it again by reprinting ten of this late and deeply lamented author's detective novels. Included are *A Murder Is Announced* (1950) and *Murder with Mirrors* (1952)–both featuring Miss Marple. The late and equally lamented M. Poirot appears in *Evil Under the Sun* (1941) and the classic *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (1926)–in its 30th printing. Also available are *Death on the Nile* (1937) (Poirot) and the not too familiar non-series effort *The Seven Dials Mystery* (1929) from Bantam, and *The Moving Finger* (1943) (Miss Marple) and the mystical short story collection *The Mysterious Mr. Quin* (1930) from Dell.

BRUNO FISCHER

The Evil Days (1973) (Ballantine) starts when a suburban housewife finds a bag of valuable jewels, but hesitates to locate its owners. A kidnapping and murder soon follow in a complicated chain of events. This is Fischer's first novel after a lapse of too many years, but it is probably his best effort to date.

THOMAS GIFFORD

A tense, tight narrative of murder in the sub-zero Minnesota snowdrifts enlarges and takes on international ramifications as a monstrous conspiracy threatens to engulf the world in *The Wind Chill Factor* (1975) (Ballantine). Double dealing and triple crosses abound in this incredibly complex tale, but it's one of the best and most coherent espionage thrillers that I've read in recent years.

JOE GORES

Interface (1974) (Ballantine) is a harsh, searing view of the lower depths of San Francisco's underworld. This curiously unlikable novel is replete with 4, 10, and 12 letter words, unsympathetic (to say the least!) characters, and excessively spectacular violence. It does contain dramatic tension, a fast-moving narrative pace, and some adroit misdirection that is almost worthy of the much more genteel Miss Christie.

JOHN D. MACDONALD

One good thing about the success of the Travis McGee series is Fawcett's willingness (or should I say eagerness?) to periodically reprint MacDonald's earlier and better work. He can be found at just about the top of his form in the uncharacteristic (and slightly wacky) fantasy, *The Girl, the Gold Watch, & Everything* (1962), and *A Flash of Green* (1962), which takes the subject of Florida real estate speculation and transmutes it into a fascinating and suspenseful reading experience.

PATRICIA MOYES

Recent work by this extremely gifted writer has not, I'm sorry to say, appeared in paper covers. This epic blunder is only partially rectified by Penguin's reprint of *The Curious Affair of the Third Dog* (1973). It starts with Chief Superintendent Henry Tibbett and his wife Emmy attempting to spend a quiet and peaceful weekend in the country, but, as you might suspect, their plans go awry when violence strikes at a greyhound racing stadium.

ROBERT B. PARKER

The Godwulf Manuscript (1973) (Berkeley) is an extremely good and fresh private eye novel set in Boston. It concerns the irrepressible Spencer's efforts to prove his client's innocence in a murder case. Drugs, gangsters,

Continued on page 237

CATALOGUE OF CRIME (Supplement Two)

By J. B. and W.H.T.

S 10 BAKER, CARLOS

The Gay Head Conspiracy
Endpaper Map of Martha's Vineyard
Scrib. 1973

Nothing is more satisfactory than murder on a small island: it combines fixed limits with open sea and all its possibilities of secret night-boating and winking lights. The eminent scholar, critic, and biographer of Hemingway has made full use of these advantages in a sensible plot told in agreeable prose. The variety of island figures and foreigners of all sorts, coupled with an original motive (forget drugs for once), insures that the reader is not bored for a minute.

On reflection, a few carping thoughts occur. The tale of detection is a bit hybridized with the thriller form, though not in so episodic a manner as in the author's novel, *The Land of Rumbelow* (1963). But accepting the picaresque element, one would still wish that the hero's escape (fresh from a session in bed with a nice girl) should not happen as told: the tough guys belie their name and reputation. Note, in addition, a left-over mystery on the last page, after the end, where six isolated initials suggest a continuation of the cypher, but give no clue to the required volume.

S 11 BONETT, JOHN & EMERY

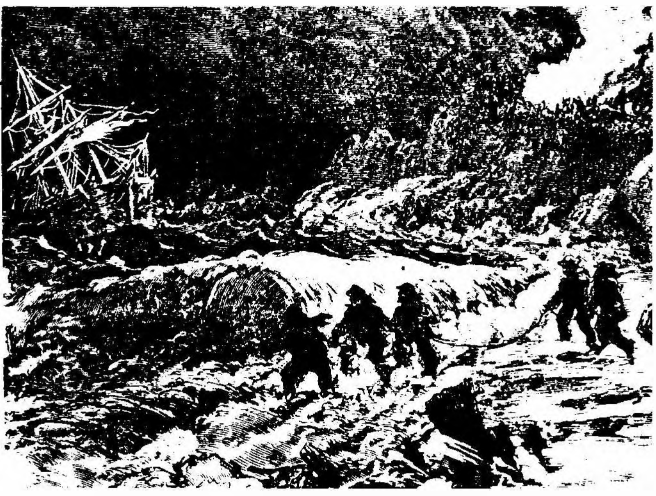
The Sound of Murder
Walker 1971 (orig. 1970)

Though they still live in Spain, for their fiction the authors have made a notable return to London. Here the Inspector Borges of earlier tales is visiting England and helps Chief Inspector Mallick to answer the question how Halbert Corsair (a ruthless publishing tycoon) came to fall from the window of his flat. Good old-fashioned detection, complete with floor plan—and even the overheard cough is a functional clue. As usual, quite too many people had good reason to terminate the victim's existence. (226+)

S 12 BRUCE, LEO

Death on Allhallowe'en
WHA 1970

In the forty years between Miles Burton's *Secret of High Eldersham* and the work in hand, dozens of tales have used witchcraft in aid of murder. One of two things may be expected: the Satanic rites actually take place and this calls for good writing to produce the genuine thrill or they are only talked of and feared, and the grim atmosphere is used to mask mundane misdoing. Leo Bruce, who knows English village life down to the ground (and even below it), gives us in this



Carolus Deene investigation a skillfully written piece, which maintains suspense in spite of an excess of poorly differentiated people. But the resolution is somewhat scamped, as are also the mechanics of the murder in full view of a large audience. (The author moreover seems to think that Allhallowe'en is celebrated under that name in the U.S.) (316+)

S 13 CASSON, STANLEY (1889-1944)

Murder by Burial
HH 1938

A remarkable tale, unfortunately the author's sole venture into mystery writing. It is full of wit, invention, character, and minute detection. In an English provincial town a couple of amateur archaeologists are at cross-purposes regarding proposed excavations, and both come to bad ends. The author's knowledge of archaeology is evident, and he is equally adept at making the concluding suspense and catastrophe impressive.

S 14 EBERHART, MIGNON G.

The Cases of Susan Dare
CCD 1934

Because of the legitimate interest in early attempts at creating a woman detective, *The Cases of Susan Dare* have acquired a word-of-mouth reputation which the stories themselves do not bear out. Only the last of the six cases, a question of identity, is in any way original or charged with suspense. The others are put together with little regard for credibility, and only a listless magazine reader could find satisfaction in their routine efforts at shudders and thrills. What is more, throughout these long and clumsy affairs Susan is below the standard of her day for female competence: she panics in bed at sounds in the corridor, her knees shake on stairways, and she stifles an endless supply of screams. Fortunately, the reporter Jim Byrne is somewhere about, or at the end of a telephone, whenever Sue's Suddenly Scared. (781)

Continued on page 237

CHECKLIST OF MYSTERY, DETECTIVE AND SUSPENSE FICTION PUBLISHED IN THE U.S., JANUARY-MARCH 1976

By M. S. Cappadonna

Anderson, J.R.L.: *Death in the North Sea,* Stein, 6.95
Anderson, Patrick: *The President's Mistress,* Simon, 8.95
Arrighi, Mel: *Navona 1000,* Bobbs, 7.95
Ashford, Jeffrey: *Three Layers of Guilt,* Walker, 6.95
Bagby, George: *Two in the Bush,* Doubleday, 5.95
Barak, Michael: *The Secret List of Heinrich Roehm,* Morrow, 6.95
Bartram, George: *The Aelian Fragment,* Putnam, 7.95
Benton, Kenneth: *Craig and the Midas Touch,* Walker, 6.95
Berckman, Evelyn: *The Crown Estate,* Doubleday, 7.95
Black, Gavin: *A Big Wind for Summer,* Harper, 7.95
Boyle, Robert: *Babysitter,* Walker, 7.95
Braine, John: *The Pious Agent,* Atheneum, 7.95
Bramble, Forbes: *The Strange Case of Deacon Brodie,* Coward, 8.95
Bryers, Paul: *Target Plutex,* Doubleday, 7.95
Buckley, William F., Jr.: *Saving the Queen,* Doubleday, 7.95
Burley, W. J.: *Wycliffe and the Pea-green Boat,* Walker, 6.95
Butterworth, Michael: *Remains to be Seen,* Doubleday, 5.95
Canning, Victor: *The Kingsford Mark,* Morrow, 6.95
Cardiff, Sara: *The Speaking Stones,* Coward, 7.95
Charteris, Leslie: *The Saint and the Hapsburg Necklace,* Doubleday, 5.95
Clifford, Francis: *Drummer in the Dark,* Harcourt, 7.95
Conway, Laura: *Take Heed of Loving Me,* Saturday Review, 6.95
Cooper, Edmund: *Prisoner of Fire,* Walker, 6.95
Cooper, Will: *Death Has a Thousand Doors,* Bobbs, 7.95
Creasey, John: *Death in the Rising Sun,* Walker, 6.95
Creasey, John: *Let's Kill Uncle Lionel,* McKay, 6.95
Curtiss, Ursula: *The Birthday Gift,* Dodd, 5.95
Davies, L. P.: *Possession,* Doubleday, 5.95
Disney, Doris Miles: *Winifred,* Doubleday, 5.95
Dobyns, Stephen: *Saratoga Longshot,* Atheneum, 8.95
Freeling, Nicolas: *The Bugles Blowing,* Harper, 6.95
Goldstein, Arthur D.: *Nobody's Sorry He Got Killed,* Random, 6.95
Gould, Heywood: *One Dead Debutante,* St. Martin's, 7.95
Harrington, R. E.: *The Seven of Swords,* Putnam, 7.95
Hartley, Norman: *The Viking Process,* Simon, 7.95
Hill, Christopher, *Jackdaw,* Holt, 6.95
Hilton, John Buxton: *No Birds Sang,* St. Martin's, 7.95
Hinkemeyer, Michael T.: *Summer Solstice,* Putnam, 7.95
Holden, Genevieve: *Down a Dark Alley,* Doubleday, 5.95
Hynd, Noel: *Revenge,* Dial, 7.95
Innes, Michael: *The Appleby File,* Dodd, 5.95
John, Hendrix: *The Carnellian Circle,* Atheneum, 8.95
Jones, Elwyn: *Barlow Comes to Judgment,* St. Martin's 7.95
Kaplan, Arthur: *A Killing for Charity,* Coward, 7.95
Keating, H.R.F.: *A Remarkable Case of Burglary,* Doubleday, 5.95
Klop, Thomas: *Harmattan,* Bobbs, 7.95
Kluge, P. F.: *The Day That I Die,* Bobbs, 7.95
Koontz, Dean R.: *Night Chills,* Atheneum, 8.95
Law, Janice: *The Big Payoff,* Houghton, 6.95
Lee, John: *The Ninth Man,* Doubleday, 8.95
Leonard, Elmore: *Swag,* Delacorte, 7.95
Lewin, Michael Z.: *Night Cover,* Knopf, 7.95
Ludlum, Robert: *The Gemini Contenders,* Dial, 8.95
McCutchan, Philip: *Coach North,* Walker, 5.95
MacDonald, John D.: *Nightmare in Pink,* Lippincott, 6.95
MacKenzie, Donald: *Raven in Flight,* Houghton, 6.95
Maling, Arthur: *Ripoff,* Harper, 6.95
Marlowe, Stephen: *Translation,* Prentice-Hall, 7.95
Marshall, William: *Yellowthread Street,* Holt, 5.95
Martin, Ian Kennedy: *Regan,* Holt, 6.95
Neely, Richard: *A Madness of the Heart,* Crowell, 6.95
Olesker, J. Bradford: *No Place Like Home,* Putnam, 6.95
Patterson, James: *The Thomas Berryman Number,* Little, 7.95
Pauley, Barbara Anne: *Voices Long Hushed,* Doubleday, 5.95
Pearson, Peter: *Postscript for Malpas,* Dodd, 5.95
Pike, Robert L.: *Deadline: 2 a.m.,* Doubleday, 6.95
Porter, Joyce: *The Package Included Murder,* Bobbs, 7.95
Powell, Michael: *A Waiting Game,* St. Martin's, 7.95
Pronzini, Bill and Barry N. Malzberg: *The Running of the Beasts,* Putnam, 8.95
Reno, Marie: *The Final Proof,* Harper, 6.95
Roberts, Willo Davis: *Expendable,* Doubleday, 5.95
Roffman, Jan: *Why Someone Had to Die,* Doubleday, 5.95
Rosenberg, Stuart: *When the Bough Breaks,* Crowell, 6.95
Rosenblum, Robert: *The Sweetheart Deal,* Putnam, 8.95
Rossiter, John: *The Villains,* Walker, 7.95
Rostand, Robert: *The D'Artagnan Signature,* Putnam, 7.95
Sapir, Richard: *Bressio,* Random, 6.95
Seaman, Donald: *The Chameleon Course,* Coward, 7.95
Selwyn, Francis: *Sergeant Verity and the Imperial Diamond,* Stein, 7.95
Simenon, Georges: *Maigret and the Black Sheep,* Harcourt, 6.95
Simmons, Geoffrey: *The Z-Papers,* Arbor, 7.95
Stratton, Ted: *Tourist Trap,* Putnam, 6.95
Wainwright, John: *Landscape with Violence,* St.Martin's, 7.95

Webster, Noah: *Witchdance in Bavaria,* Doubleday, 5.95
West, Elliot: *The Killing Kind,* Houghton, 7.95
Wilk, Max: *The Kissinger Noodles, or Westward, Mr. Ho,* Norton, 7.95
Willis, Ted: *The Left-handed Sleeper,* Putnam, 7.95
Winslow, Pauline Glen: *The Brandenburg Hotel,* St. Martin's, 7.95
Winward, Walter: *Fives Wild,* Atheneum, 8.95
Wolfe, Michael: *The Chinese Fire Drill,* Harper, 6.95
Woodhouse, Martin: *Moon Hill,* Coward, 7.95
Yarboro, Chelsea Quinn: *Ogilvie, Tallant and Moon,* Putnam, 6.95

PAPERBOUND

Adkins, Bill: *Prison at Obregon,* Popular Library, 1.25
Brown, Carter: *The Savage Sisters,* New American Library, 1.25
Caulfield, Max: *Bruce Lee Lives?,* Dell, 1.50
Christie, Agatha: *The Crooked House,* Pocket, 1.50
Christie, Agatha: *Evil Under the Sun,* Pocket, 1.50
Christie, Agatha: *Funerals are Fatal,* Pocket, 1.50
Christie, Agatha: *Hickory Dickory Death,* Pocket, 1.50
Christie, Agatha: *Mrs. McGinty's Dead,* Pocket, 1.50
Christie, Agatha: *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd,* Pocket, 1.50
Christie, Agatha: *Murder with Mirrors,* Pocket, 1.50
Christie, Agatha: *Remembered Death,* Pocket, 1.50
Christie, Agatha: *So Many Steps to Death,* Pocket, 1.50
Derrick, Lionel: *Bloody Boston,* Pinnacle, 1.25 (The Penetrator, No. 2)
Derrick, Lionel: *Dixie Death Squad,* Pinnacle, 1.25 (The Penetrator, No. 3)
De Villers, Gerard: *The Belfast Connection,* Pinnacle, 1.25 (Malko No. 12)
Disney, Doris Miles: *The Day Miss Bessie Lewis Disappeared,* Ace, 1.50
Durrenmatt, Friedrich: *End of the Game* (translation of *Der Richter und sein Henker*), Warner, 1.25
Eberhart, Mignon G.: *Danger Money,* Popular Library, 1.25
Fish, Robert L.: *A Handy Death,* Pocket, 1.50
Gardner, Erle Stanley: *The Case of the Drowning Duck* and *The Case of the Crooked Candle,* Pocket, 1.95
Garfield, Brian: *Hopscotch,* Fawcett, 1.75
Garfield, Brian: *The Romanov Succession,* Fawcett, 1.75
Gilman, Dorothy: *A Nun in the Closet,* Fawcett, 1.50
Gober, Dom: *Killer Cop,* Holloway, 1.50
Grant, Edward: *The Ultimate Weapon,* Pinnacle, 1.25
Lewis, David: *The Andromeda Assignment,* Pinnacle, 1.25
McCarry, Charles: *The Tears of Autumn,* Fawcett, 1.95
MacDonald, John D.: *A Flash of Green,* Fawcett, 1.50
O'Donnell, Lillian: *Dial 577 R-A-P-E,* Bantam, 1.25
Parker, Robert B.: *God Save the Child,* Berkley, 1.25
Pollitz, Edward A.: *The Forty-First Thief,* Dell, 1.75
Rosenberger, Joseph: *The Iron Swastika Plot,* Pinnacle, 1.25 (Death Merchant No. 15)
Sapir, Richard and Warren Murphy: *Brain Drain,* Pinnacle, 1.25
Shannon, Dell: *Crime File,* Pocket, 1.50
Shannon, Dell: *Deuces Wild,* Pocket, 1.25
Simon, Roger L.: *Wild Turkey,* Pocket, 1.50
Simpson, George E. and Neal R. Berger: *Ghostboat,* Dell, 1.95
Stanley, Michael: *The Swiss Conspiracy,* Avon, 1.75
Stout, Rex: *The Broken Vase,* Pyramid, 1.25
Tidyman, Ernest: *Line of Duty,* Bantam, 1.50
Townsend, Peter: *Fisheye,* Pinnacle, 1.25
Tracy, Don: *High, Wide and Ransom,* Pocket, 1.25
Wager, Walter: *Telefon,* Warner, 1.95
Weisman, John: *Quadraphonic Homicide,* Pinnacle, 1.25 (Headhunters No. 4)
Westheimer, David: *The Olmec Head,* Pyramid, 1.50
Westlake, Donald E.: *Jimmy the Kid,* Ballantine, 1.50

PAPER CRIMES

By Fred Dueren

Several items are related to movie tie-ins this quarter. Victor Canning's *The Rainbow Pattern*, released in April by Award Books, is the basis for Alfred Hitchcock's film version, *Family Plot*. . . . In July New American Library will bring out *The Domino Principle* by Adam Kennedy; the movie is currently being shot, starring Gene Hackman, Candice Bergen and Mickey Rooney . . . . On the crime periphery will be *Movie Magic: The Story of Special Effects in the Cinema* by John Brosnan (also from NAL). Some of the secrets exposed involve *Dracula* and the *Godfather*. . . . Television writer (for *Kojak* and *The Joe Forrester Show*) Dallas Barnes is getting a build-up from Signet Books for *Yesterday Is Dead*. My own opinion of that next time. . . . Popular Library started a new series by Alan Riefe in April about detective Tyger. So far six books are scheduled. . . . And for what it's worth, Pyramid is pushing Hugh McDonald's *The Hour of the Blue Fox* (about spywork in the chemical and biological warfare areas) as the book the Russian agency TASS requested an advance copy of.

One of the most fascinating and exciting intrigue novels of this decade is *The Caesar Code* by Johannes Mario Simmel (Popular Library, 1976). It offers a maze-type puzzle in which Manuel Aranda searches for the reason his father, an Argentine chemical manufacturer, was poisoned in a century-old Viennese bookshop. Meanwhile American, French and Russian agents alternately hunt and protect Aranda. And, as in Ross Macdonald's books, the plot twists crookedly into the past, with a cinematic fluidity, as layer after layer of deceit and misdirection are peeled back. The numerous characters and the situations have a vivid reality as they rush to the taut, shocking finish. Originally published in Europe in 1970, *The Caesar Code* leaves me hoping more of Simmel's best-selling novels will be translated.

Don't believe the cover of *Diamondstud* by Norman Singer (Manor Books, 1976). The book uses a 19-year-old con man's escapades in Miami Beach only as a backdrop for endless sex. It is similar to *The Sting* only in that in both books the players shoot for high stakes, and stage police raids to win their booty.

Pinnacle Books appropriately classifies *Devlin's Triangle* by Basil Heatter (1976) as adventure rather than mystery. There is a certain amount of mystery, however, in the effort to find a missing yacht. Tim Devlin of Devlin Marine Underwriters is in the Caribbean, single-handedly solving the problem of missing vessels in the Devil's Triangle. Devlin is the whole book. He is a super-hero who can out-fight, out-talk, out-sex anyone else in the universe. "Without turning his head, he managed a sideways glance and then the briefest glimpse to the rear" —try that sometime! Standard fare for this type of thing, and better done than a lot of others. (*The Golden Stag*, an earlier Devlin novel, is also available.)

Not being a bridge player, I cannot judge those aspects of *Sherlock Holmes, Bridge Detective* by George Gooden and Frank Thomas (Pinnacle, 1976; orig. 1973). But don't buy it for the detective elements unless you get large pleasures from small name-dropping references to the Holmes canon.

Pleasant, quick reading is the main attraction of Arthur Liebman's *Ms. Mysteries* (Pocket Books, 1976). With a unifying feminine theme, these 19 stories show women as victims, criminals, and occasionally detectives. The tales will amuse you, once or twice raise the hair on the back of your neck, and amaze you with their individuality and uniqueness.

I found Ian MacAlister's *Valley of the Assassins* (Fawcett Gold Medal, 1975) difficult to classify properly in the mystery-detective field. It is, as the cover states, a high adventure, chase, and treasure hunt in the Middle East; it's complete with hidden ancient maps, opposing agents out to liberate the treasure from the desecrators of a hallowed tomb, and a run-for-your-life escape across a trackless desert. MacAlister has put together an enjoyable tale that smoothly covers a lot of territory without the boredom of endless detail.

A Chicago private eye, Marty Cole, is the narrator of *Alice Dies Twice* (Major Books, 1975). The plot is feasible enough. Alice Mark had run away from home to pursue a stage career. When her wealthy father dies, it's Cole's job to track her down to get a signature and settle the estate. He finds her and returns her to Chicago easily enough, but she's killed before she can sign the papers. Cole, naturally, must find the killer. The story moves swiftly and has a neat little solution, but the characterization is below-average quality cardboard.

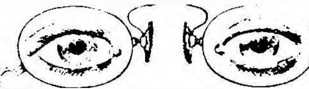
Bill Adkins' *Prison at Obregon* (Popular Library, 1976) is competent crime-suspense. David Hill is a San Francisco businessman who allows himself to be talked into smuggling dope into the U.S. for a Mexican Syndicate. Despite careful planning, the police learn of the plot and arrest Hill. His subsequent trial, jail sentence and plans for escape make up the last half of the book, with a surprising but realistic twist at the end. No detection or mystery as such, but a well-done example of its type.

Number 9 in the Narc series by Robert Hawkes is

Kill For It (Signet, 1975). On the whole the book is about average for these series affairs. Sex and violence are present, but not excessively dwelled upon. Federal narcotics agent John Bolt is tought but not a superman. The complex plot involves three factions: the narcs themselves, some hoods aiming for a three-million-dollar payoff from the sale of drugs stolen from the police storage room, and the cops who stole the drugs. Each group, each man, is in it for himself, and will do anything to the others to get what he wants. Acceptable for suspense and action; lower marks for mystery and detection.

If you like stories about innocent heroes beset by amoral businessmen and politicians, then *The Fun House* by Philip Reid (Penguin: orig. 1974) is for you. Here Stuart Harris is a free-lance journalist who must continue petty, muck-raking assignments until his big book is published. But suddenly publishers won't talk to him, his apartment is searched, and he's arrested (framed) for smuggling LSD from Amsterdam to London. After that action and bizarre characters come tumbling along with all the nonchalance and pleasure of the sights in a carnival fun house. You'll always be a few steps ahead of Harris, and it's not all believable, but who wants reality in a fun house?

A VIEW FROM WALL STREET:



SOCIAL CRITICISM IN THE MYSTERY NOVELS OF EMMA LATHEN

By Jane S. Bakerman

I

One of the charms as well as one of the shortcomings of the mystery novel is the formula plot. Readers like a partially predictable plot because it's reassuring, pleasant, and not too demanding; on the other hand, any writer's formula which becomes too pat, too predictable, becomes also a handicap, for readers feel bored and put upon by the easy guesses the story triggers. Mary J. Latis and Martha Hennisart, writing as Emma Lathen,[1] do a masterful job of walking that thin line between reassuring predictability and boring facility, and this balance is no accident. Predictably, each of the books will introduce us to some phase of activity connected with Wall Street, America's money market; fairly uniquely, however, each book will also introduce us to some stringent comments about American life, the Lathen social criticism, which is generally commended by critics,[2] and which really qualifies as social satire.[3] It is this quality of social criticism, in fact, which is primarily responsible for saving Lathen from the formulism which is too heavy, too dull, indeed, book-crippling.

The second factor which lifts the Lathen books into the area of good reading, actually good fiction, is her light touch. The abounding humor in the stories works within and alongside of the social criticism to make the point that popularity need not indicate shabbiness of subject or of style; Lathen is a good writer who happens to write mystery stories—which happen to sell well.

From the point of view of space allotment, the range of the social criticism is great, stretching from brief (but pointed) asides through recurring items, to central themes. The satire is generally launched from a traditionalist position, frequently voiced by the central character, John Putnam Thatcher, chief trust officer of the Sloan Guaranty Trust Bank, who, along with his associates, lends not only point of view but also continuity to the novels. The humor—not even Thatcher, himself, is immune to the Lathen sniping—usually saves this essentially traditionalist position from being heavy-handed or dated. Instead, with Thatcher, Lathen examines the business world, human nature, and human emotions with insight and wry humor. The results are great fun for the reader.

II

Lathen's brief asides are one of the joys of her books. In his junketings around Wall Street and its environs (which stretch to remarkable lengths: from the Street itself into suburbia and beyond into rurual areas), Thatcher is given cause to comment on many, many facets of the American scene, attacking our foibles

and supporting some of our habits; bemoaning our biases and examining the clay bases of some of our icons.

Not afraid to examine facets of modern life that are generally held to be sacrosanct, Lathen takes aim at such topics as modern music:

> A mighty clamor arose from thousands of human voices, hands, feet. . . . It was understandable. No matter what the critics might say, this was enthusiasm for release, or, more simply, the human propensity to raise cain in any socially acceptable manner. Functionally speaking . . . [the composition] was not music but an outlet that left everyone happy without constituting a threat to life or property.[4]

Not only are Thatcher and a surprising number of his acquaintances dragged off to concerts, but, in the course of work—and investigations—appear at numerous cocktail parties, one of the events Americans complain about but don't *do* anything about.

> Under the best of circumstances, cocktail parties were not Thatcher's favorite form of social intercourse. He had however learned to cope with them with only minor vexation of spirit. . . . It was, for example, a practice of his to discharge his obligations by speaking briefly to the guest of honor or the host, then to blend into the background and let the ebb and flow of guests camouflage discreet withdrawal. Furthermore, that withdrawal was as early as possible.[5]

If Thatcher had found a method of doing away with or overcoming cocktail parties, we might find him too good, too clever, to be true. But like us, the readers, the best he can do is learn to cope!

Some facets of American life which are generally deprecated are grist for Lathen's mill, but her slant on them is apt to be a little different; frequently that slant reveals her traditionalist—and pro-*free*, free enterprise—stance. The hard sell, for example, is generally denounced; Thatcher views the practice more practically: "Hard sells and strong pitches have earned a bad name, but Thatcher could list many respectable and profitable firms—from encyclopedia publishers to mutual funds—that relied on them" (*Sticks*, p. 96). "Respectable" and "profitable" are the key words; Lathen recognizes the nuisance value of these practices but reminds us of their workability, a kind of combination of social criticism and propaganda, as it were. In a like fashion, she suggests we re-examine the idea of speculation; overstatement is her device.

> Like termites, speculators do not enjoy general esteem. At regular intervals, they are excoriated by West German finance ministers and United States undersecretaries as enemies of basically sound structures. Besides their other nameless crimes, speculators are held responsible for the devaluation of the dollar, the pollution of the Mediterranean, and all British budgets since 1947.
>
> At the Sloan Guaranty Trust such austere views did not obtain. No bank harbors a congenital aversion to the spectacle of making money.[6]

Lathen is less soft-pedaled when it comes to using hard sell techniques and speculation to trap or to fool the public. In *Pick Up Sticks*, for instance, the business situation which triggers the plot is a "development colony," designed to provide a second, recreation home for well-to-do families. The early note of complaint struck by two such prospects is never altered:

> 'They said it would be a weekend when you could see New England at its best. But it hasn't turned out that way at all. It's been a rat race from the beginning to the end. . . . Of course, we realize that we live in a materialistic society where everything is directed to a profit goal, but we'd never seen anything like this.' (*Sticks*, pp. 12-13)

In using this device, Lathen achieves two ends; she establishes the company as pushy and impersonal, coldly calculating, and that's useful, for one of the partners will turn out to be the murderer—and we don't want to generate undue sympathy for a potential basher. On the other hand, she characterizes the speaker as naive and a little too cavalier about the free enterprise, pro-profit system Lathen advocates.

This unusual slant on things, often the very basis of social commentary wherever one finds it, appears in a more amusing form (in contrast to the instructional tone taken in the examples we noted above) when Lathen examines the clay bases of some highly regarded American institutions. Committees, for example, she polishes off in short order; Thatcher says, " 'We're not supposed to do anything. We wait for something to happen. Then everybody blames us [the committee]. That keeps the principals in the clear.' " (*Death*, p. 62)

Also, she takes a clear, piercing look at certain prerogatives Americans feel are theirs by birthright. She doesn't approve, for instance, of the concept that the automobile, its ownership, and its privilege of speeding directly to an objective are wisely held American tenets. Thatcher, after an irritating but minor auto accident, wonders, for example, why "his compatriots regard the automobile as an inalienable right, not a consumer durable" (*Sweet*, p. 6). In another scene, a brief stop to discharge passengers on a crowded street leads to honking horns, clenched fists, shouting voices; the "guilty" driver's face "betrayed the anxiety endemic to motorists participating in modern public festivities."[7]

Nothing is sacred here, not even habits like pre-parade rituals:

> After the police come the entrepreneurs. The Good Humor man takes up a strategic position and does land-office business regardless of temperature. The grandstand, hastily erected the night before to the imminent peril of all passing traffic, remains empty with the solitary exception of an unknown middle-aged couple seated quite far back who return the stare of the *hoi polloi* with massive self-consciousness. Dogs appear from nowhere and prance across the street in defiance of regulations under the benevolent gaze of authority. Children elude parents, balloons are sold, people shout, flags fly. Nothing happens. (*Place*, pp. 38-39)

Even institutions generally revered through a combination of genuine quality and snob-appeal appear "warts and all"; Educational Television is one of those:

> Craig Phibbs was famous, in some circles, for his *cinéma vérité.* With a poetic camera and a disenchanted intelligence, he had produced the masterpieces that enabled Public Broadcasting to show how tawdry and commercial the rest of television was. Who could forget *Incest,* fifteen installments about life in parts of West Virginia that Jay Rockefeller would never see? Then, *Foetus,* the frank investigation-in-depth of the eighth pregnancy of an unwed mother. And what about *Suburb,* which showed Elmhurst, Illinois, for what it was? (*Sweet,* p. 68)

III

In addition to the brief asides in which Lathen indulges, to the delight of her readers, she also comments about several recurring items; these comments almost form a set of themes running throughout the Lathen canon.

Naturally, human nature is chief among these motifs, and Lathen looks with a tolerant but skeptical eye at all of her people, "heroes" and villains alike.

> The tortured complexities of the human spirit are, as we all know, extremely interesting. People will talk endlessly about themselves. With very little encouragement, they will talk just as much about their friends. Such explorations are variously regarded as: Palliative, recreational, liberating, or compulsory. Whatever the rationale, many people relish the process of peeling layer after layer to come to essence. (*Sticks,* p. 43)

Not the least among these "peelers" is Thatcher, himself, for, though he sometimes berates himself for it, that human curiosity, the desire to know a great deal—if not all—about a person or a situation, is the driving curiosity (the motivation) behind his inquiries. Furthermore, Lathen perceives basic human nature as a clear and fairly convincing explanation for some puzzling signs of the times:

> Sukey as campus radical had appalled her father, dismayed her faculty adviser, and terrorized her roommate. Sukey's mother, however, had—in her husband's opinion—remained preternaturally placid. She had made one visit to SDS Headquarters and noted the large number of attractive young men. Without doubting Sukey's sincerity for a moment, she had decided that nature, as usual, had found the shortest distance between two points. The path was tiresome, of course. But a good deal less tiresome than young couples throbbing sympathetically to Maeterlinck's *Blue Bird,* which had been the path obligatory for nineteenth century romantics. (*Sticks,* p. 105)

Also apparent to the Lathen eye is the reason why sauces for all geese and ganders are not necessarily alike after all:

> Trinkham believed devoutly in non-geographic exploration. Since he was a bachelor living in considerable luxury—not a suburban husband with house, children, lawns and mortgages—he had no reason to hanker after protracted business trips to Romantic Rome, Exotic Cairo, Fun-Filled Frankfurt or Swinging London.[8]

Another recurring motif is Chauvinism, patriot style. As we have seen, junkets for the Sloan often require a certain amount of foreign travel, and most of the Sloan employees, including Thatcher, regard such assignments as blessings very mixed indeed. In *Sweet and Low,* a cocoa buyer sets the tone for most Lathen comments about countries other than the United States, managing to convey the impression that revolution is endemic to African nations, " 'Basically, we're experts on crop diseases, growing conditions, things like that. But Africa is Africa. We keep an ear to the ground for political trouble, too. After all, a revolution can do as much damage as an epidemic of black pod.' " (*Sweet,* p. 34) Indeed! In another novel, when Thatcher resolves a situation involving racial conflict, he is immediately offered an ambassadorship to "a small, new African country" (*Death,* p. 181), and the State Department is dispatched as simplistic and obvious.

The chief setting for one novel is Greece, and in this book, too, Lathen conveys the clear sense that the USA is the best—and safest—place to stay; sometimes the comments are pretty blunt and a little heavy-handed, such as " 'With Greeks, you never can tell' " (*Greece,* p. 10), and " 'Nicolls is probably trapped somewhere, being talked to death' " (*Greece,* p. 25). While the change in setting is interesting, as always in a Lathen work, the reader grows a bit restive under this type of overseas social commentary. Lathen is on safer ground when she saves her social criticism for her native soil.

Thatcher and most of his cohorts are urban-oriented and regard trips into suburbia and exurbia as visits to foreign places; they make their discomfort clear. Thatcher characterizes one opulent and tax-wise country estate in this manner, "Now it was all coming back. Magnificent foliage, exhilarating air—and everlasting talk about livestock. . . . Thatcher side-stepped with care. Privately, he thought that tax losses could be achieved without exposure to animal droppings" (*Place,* pp. 20-21).

In only one way is Thatcher pro-country, and that is in his proclivity for long vacation-tramps in rugged country; here, he and his unusually loyal secretary, Rose Corsa, part company in several ways, "Queens-bred Miss Corsa did wonder why an important man like Mr. Thatcher should be so attracted to marching through the countryside between

Maine and Georgia. A stroll around Kissena Park was one thing " (*Sticks*, p. 3). But his tolerance is strictly limited to uninhabited areas; others stretch his mettle too far:

> The trouble with the country, he thought. . . was that it was so difficult to get away from people. In the city you could always plead an urgent appointment to have a drink with somebody at the Plaza. But in Shaftesbury one was driven to wilder flights of fancy. (*Place*, p. 39)

Another important and re-surfacing theme in the Lathen body of writing is one which occupies a good deal of the time and energy of most contemporary Americans, the generation gap. In these instances, Lathen is often at her funniest; she is always very pointed. For example, she rather fully characterizes a youngster with a glancing sweep: "He was marking time in sullen silence during the ten years between him and his driver's license" (*Sweet*, p. 84). The tendency of older children to "guide" their parents does not escape attention: "Duncan was the eldest of the Morland children. He was thirty-five and putting on weight. Of late, he had begun to feel it was his duty to give his parents the benefit of his mature counsel" (*Sticks*, p. 111), and she notes, in that same novel, as elsewhere, the proclivity of the second generation to rebel from the standards of their parents:

> Henry had justified his move to New England many years ago on the grounds that the children could be raised close to nature. . . . Upon achieving emancipation, the three fled to large cities and established residences in sky-scrapers. . . . Not one of them, so far as was known, had seen a blade of grass in years. (*Sticks*, pp. 111-112)

The generation gap is revealed at its most pronounced when Thatcher must take the wife of one of his absent subordinates to the hospital to produce her second child; his time in the waiting room is terrible for him; it's a delight for the reader.

> Unbelievably, the room was populated entirely by minors.
>
> He remembered the waiting room of thirty-five years ago. He had been exposed to it three times. It had always contained a motley collection of men. . . . but all of them, indubitably, *adults*. And what did he find here, for Christ's sake? Schoolboys! There were two of them with book bags at their feet, actually doing homework! (*Greece*, p. 99)

Soon Thatcher realizes that "the occupants of the room were staring at him with mass disapproval"; evidently these younger men were also victims of the generation gap, for they regarded Thatcher as a dirty old man—not easy for the staid banker to take! (*Greece*, p. 99)

These recurring themes, then, introduce moments humorous and often insightful in themselves, and serve to provide a smoothly flowing continuity to the series of novels.

IV

With some frequency, social issues also form the *core* of the Lathen mystery novels. This trait is generally one of her great strengths in such works as *A Stitch in Time*[9] in which she dramatizes the greed of physicians who prescribe costly drugs labelled in the name of their own packaging houses. A little less successful is another novel with a social issue as dominant theme—*Ashes to Ashes*,[10] dealing with the proposed sale of a Roman Catholic grade school. In this novel, the weakness lies in the fact that the author cannot, it appears, decide which is to be the dominating motif: the mystery story or the social element, and although she satirizes clergy and laity alike, from her usual dispassionate position, the novel is less fun, more slow-moving.

Unfortunately, when Lathen undertakes one of her most important social discussions, she falls the farthest short. In *Death Shall Overcome*, she dramatizes the situation which might arise upon the advent of the first Negro's taking a seat upon the Stock Exchange. While she rises to some of her funniest heights in depicting a soulful "Kneel-In" at the Sloan—"'The minute the doors opened this morning at eight o'clock, these people marched in and started all this—praying and singing! Shocking thing to do in a bank, but it is imposing in its way, don't you think?'" (*Death*, p. 144). This event is countered by Thatcher's having the Sloan choir, usually restricted to Christmas carols, join the protesters in a rousing (and long!) rendition of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" ("What Julia Ward Howe had done for the Union, she could do again for the Sloan") (*Death*, p. 151).

The biting social satire, however, is undercut by usage of characterizations which are too pat, too readily at hand. The people protesting the seating of Edward Parry, the black, are, for example, stereotypes. One is a radical southerner, "'He's the last fading flower of the Confederacy. . . . the kind who likes to call Parry a 'nigra.' Behind his back, of course, the little rat'" (*Death*, p. 30). Another is, quite literally, a mad man (*Death*, p. 56); furthermore, his insanity is a family trait. This use of stereotyped characters undercuts the effect of the satire and diminishes the effectiveness of the book, as does, even, the description of Parry himself; he's a little too typical of Wall Street:

> Edward Parry stood in an alcove with Nat Schuyler. Like everyone present, he looked simonized for the occasion. The lurking fear of television had triggered a wave of five o'clock shaves and clean shirts. In all other visible aspects, Parry was a credit to Nat Schuyler's acumen—that is, he was a replica of a Wall Street financier with a dark skin. The net result was that his teeth and shirt looked cleaner than anybody else's. His slow, considered speech and steady handclasp as he acknowledged their greeting confirmed the impression of integrity, reliability and conservatism. A man of property at every point. In a happier era he might have been a Republican. (*Death*, p. 15)

It seems, then, that Lathen is at her weakest (which, at that, is pretty good) when she allows the social criticism to control the novel; when she, herself, controls the book, generally in works in which the social comments are rendered in brief asides or in the treatment of reappearing themes, the books are much more successful

and the social comment far more telling.

What becomes apparent as a result of this study is, however, the important fact that Emma Lathen may be the best social critic and ironist this country has produced since Edith Wharton. Even when she allows her tools to slip a bit out of control, Lathen is well worth reading, interesting, and funny. At her best, she is very good, indeed; exciting evidence that a novel doesn't have to be bad to be popular.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Julian Symons, *Mortal Consequences, A History From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1971), p. 274.

[2] "Kus and Conscience," rev. of *A Stitch in Time* by Emma Lathen, *Times Literary Supplement*, 15 Aug. 1968, p. 880.

[3] Anthony Boucher, rev. of *Murder Against the Grain*, by Emma Lathen, *New York Times Book Review*, 17 Sept. 1967, p. 47.

[4] Emma Lathen, *Death Shall Overcome* (New York: Pyramid Books, 1969), p. 124. All further references will be indicated in the text.

[5] Emma Lathen, *Pick Up Sticks* (New York: Pocket Books, 1972), pp. 24-25. All further references will be indicated in the text.

[6] Emma Lathen, *Sweet and Low* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), p. 44. All further references will be indicated in the text.

[7] Emma Lathen, *A Place for Murder* (New York: Pocket Books, 1972), p. 41. All further references will be indicated in the text.

[8] Emma Lathen, *When In Greece* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1969), pp. 9-10. All further references will be indicated in the text.

[9] Emma Lathen, *A Stitch in Time* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968).

[10] Emma Lathen, *Ashes to Ashes* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971).

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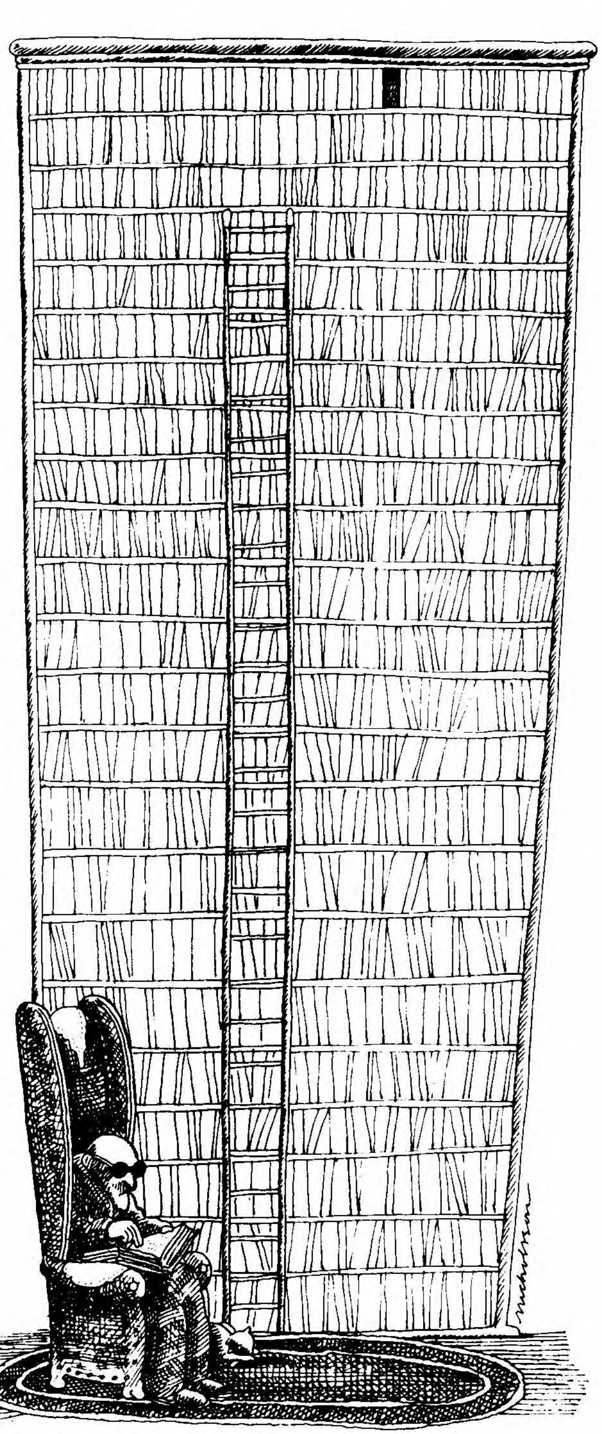

Current Material Reviews

The West End Horror, by Nicholas Meyer.
E. P. Dutton & Company, 1976; $7.95

Even the best of sequels are usually dangerous things for writers to undertake, if only because reviewers tend to be prejudiced against them. Generally they're written to follow up an earlier commercial success, it's felt, and most often after the predecessor's freshness and inspiration are gone. At worst, a book like *The West End Horror* might even attempt to out-do the uncanonical characterization of Sherlock Holmes in *Seven-Per-Cent Solution*, and over-reach itself. So this new Holmes pastiche by Nicholas Meyer was approached with a certain amount of misgiving. It came instead as a rather pleasant surprise. Less ambitious and more traditional in its treatment of Holmes and the rest of the Baker Street menage than *The Seven-Per-Cent Solution*, in its quieter way *The West End Horror* is probably the better novel of the two.

With the scene set firmly this time in the London of 1895, Holmes and Watson are plunged into a memorable case that begins with the murder of a universally disliked theater critic and ends with Britain's bare escape from a national disaster of the first magnitude. Crossing their paths in the course of the investigation are some of the glowing luminaries and rising stars of the London stage: George Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde, Gilbert and Sullivan, Bram Stoker, Henry Irving and Ellen Terry . . . . The literary and dramatic currents of the day, pictured at a time when it would *not* always be 1895: a time when electricity had begun to supplant gaslight, when Wilde was about to fall into disgrace and Shaw's career about to take flight . . . a time, in short, when an era was visibly beginning to come to an end.

The Seven-Per-Cent Solution succeeded in large degree through its shock value, stripping away Holmes's essential sense of self-control and throwing him up against the emerging genius of the young Sigmund Freud. There is none of this in *The West End Horror*, the presence of those celebrities notwithstanding. Its purpose is simply to entertain. This was Conan Doyle's purpose too, and there is more than one echo of him in the novel, including a backhanded tribute to his own prowess as an amateur detective. That the novel lacks the somewhat lofty intentions of its bestselling predecessor is unimportant. Good entertainment is all too scarce, and this book affords a considerable amount of it; and while it may not be *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, still it's a better story than *A Study in Scarlet*.

– Jon L. Lellenberg

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It's probably not cricket for me to wax enthusiastic about a book for which I had a small part in the preparation, but I find it difficult to believe any library or aficionado of mystery fiction will tolerate being without *Encyclopedia of Mystery & Detection*, edited by Chris Steinbrunner and Otto Penzler (McGraw-Hill, $19.95), with the assistance of Senior Editors Marvin Lachman and Charles Shibuk, and Contributing Editors Robert A. Briney, Ron Goulart, J. Randolph Cox, and yr obdt serv. This 436 page, 300,000 word volume will almost certainly become a standard reference and remain so for years, if not decades, to come. The 600 articles cover almost every major author and major fictional character in the field, as well as a number of minor ones, with checklists and detailed filmographies where appropriate. I find very little to quarrel with in the selection of subjects for treatment (though, for example, I would never have omitted Alistair MacLean). In addition, great pain was taken to exclude error—I warrant that in spite of the massive amount of data very few will be found. You may regret the price of this magnificent encyclopedia: you will not regret the purchase.

– AJH

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Crockett on the Loose, by Brad Lang.
Leisure Books, 1975, 189 pp., $1.25.

You don't find many private-eye books in paperback originals these days, so this one deserves a good word. We're told on the back cover that Crockett is "A new type of detective," which means that he is young and has long hair. There's nothing particularly new in this any more, as fans of Moses Wine will recognize, though Crockett lacks Wine's ennui. He does have a sense of humor, and the book is light, fast-paced, and entertaining. A search for a kidnapped girl leads Crockett on the usual tour of lowlife settings, but there is a college campus thrown in for good measure and the book (believe this or not) is set in the Midwest, not California. For that reason alone it deserves a look, and a sequel. The plot is nicely complicated, the resolution is satisfactory and Crockett is much better company than many of the series characters around these days.

– Bill Crider

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Saving the Queen, by William F. Buckley, Jr.
Doubleday, 248 p., $7.95.

The morality of the CIA and the morals of the British Royal Court are very much in the news lately. William F. Buckley, in his debut as a novelist, shrewdly ties together both institutions in a cloak-and-dagger narrative of immense popular appeal.

The main events of *Saving the Queen* take place in 1951 when the United States was on the verge of creating the

hydrogen bomb and the Russians were doing their efficient best to find out the technical details. Someone, somewhere, was telling them. Surprisingly, the leak seems to be in the Royal Court in London. A young Yale graduate is recruited into the CIA to find out who is responsible.

Here begins an entertaining yarn, graced with a literate style, keen knowledge and a twinkling sense of humor. We follow the young agent's painstaking training, travel with him to England, enjoy his detour to a brothel in Paris, learn the inside tracks of a secret operation and accompany him to the Royal Palace, where he establishes a personal relationship with the Queen.

The young American's attachment to the Queen of England is lively and scandalous, yet full of endearing moments. The author has found a mischievous, unique way of illustrating Royalty in most human terms.

The plot unfolds a number of surprises and unexpected twists, culminating in an exciting life-or-death aerial sequence.

Saving the Queen, inching its way to the top of the Best Seller list, has injected a touch of sophistication and a flavor of sly irony to the genre of political intrigue. Authors like John Le Carre and Len Deighton dwell on the bleak, pessimistic and treacherous life of the secret agent. Buckley manages to convey a sense of reality by interweaving real-life personalities and events with imaginary ones and keeps the proceedings whirling with fresh humor, wit and bite.

– Amnon Kabatchnik

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Philadelphia Blowup, by Mike Barry.
Berkley Medallion Books, 1975. 185 pp., $.95.

This book is billed as "The Climactic Quest of The Lone Wolf." For those who don't know, The Lone Wolf is Burton Wulff, yet another in the long series of imitators of The Executioner. But there is a difference. If you have wondered just what kind of tricks a bloody, cross-country killing spree might play with the head of a once ordinary man, you might find more insight here than you would expect in a book of this sort. Wulff is coming apart, physically and mentally. Killing has become a meaningless act for him. He is clearly no longer sane, and there is a kind of crude power in the way that Barry carries him to his logical end, a creative act for which Barry clearly deserves some kind of recognition, considering the longevity of some of the other series heroes laboring under burdens similar to Wulff's. It's the best of its kind that I've read.

– Bill Crider

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The Mystery of the Musical Requiem!, by Aldace Wood.
"A Springbok Jigsaw Puzzle Mystery Game." Springbok Editions, A Division of Hallmark Cards, Inc., Kansas City, Missouri 64141. $6.00.

This jigsaw mystery puzzle, which has been available for about two years, is similar to the Janus Mystery Jigsaw Puzzles created a few years ago by Henry Slesar but is in some details a bit more elaborate than the Janus puzzles. The Springbok puzzle begins with the cover of the box, which shows the scene of the crime, damage caused by a bomb, the legs of two corpses, the suspects and the detective, Inspector Hammond. The box contains a two-page leaflet and 500 jumbled pieces of jigsaw puzzle. The leaflet tells what has happened up to the point of Hammond's arrival; composer Lowell Barkley and his maid have been murdered. Hammond begins questioning the suspects, who accuse each other. Barkley has left the name of his murderer in a musical manuscript, and the key to this musical code is given at the point the story ends. The jigsaw player has to put the puzzle together before he can decode the message.

As the pieces are fitted together, portraits of the suspects with information about their actions are formed around the manuscript of music. The information beside each portrait helps eliminate suspects. Can the puzzle player deduce the murderer from the information alone? In contrast to the Janus puzzles, where the picture formed by the completed puzzle gives the solution, the player of the Springbok puzzle must go further to confirm his solution by unraveling the musical code.

If the Springbok puzzle has a weakness, it is that a skillful jigsaw player can point to the criminal fairly easily by putting together about 100 of the right pieces early in the game–as one of us did. The weakness of all jigsaw mystery puzzles is that once the puzzle is completed, there is not much fun in building it again because the solution is now known, whereas in ordinary jigsaw puzzles the main purpose is to complete the picture, and this can be repeated quite often with pleasure. The comparison of a mystery to a jigsaw puzzle is common in crime fiction, and the mystery reader, putting together a jigsaw mystery puzzle, almost feels he is handling a metaphor turned to reality. Puzzles like *The Mystery of the Musical Requiem!* are good fun for an hour or two.

– E. S. and K. G. Lauterbach

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The Count, by Arthur Lenning.
G. P. Putnam's Sons, 347 p., $10.00.

Dear Boris, by Cynthia Lindsay.
Knopf, 273 p., $12.50.

Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi are gone but like their most famous creations, The Frankenstein Monster and Dracula, they refuse to die.

Posthumously, Karloff and Lugosi have become cult heroes and their motion pictures are going through renewed and appreciative scrutiny.

A growing number of books is dedicated to the analysis of the Horror Film and there are a few recent biographies

about the two kings of the genre.

The Count was written by a hero-worshipper of Lugosi who has been interested in the man behind the flowing cape and fearsome fangs since childhood. It is written with compassion but fails to illuminate Lugosi's little known personal life. Still, we learn that Bela was born in 1882 in a small Hungarian town, played in a few provincial theatres, scored success as a leading man, including a distinguished performance of Romeo. Because of a political purge among Hungarian artists he escaped to Vienna, appeared in a few German movies, then emigrated to America. His continental manner, suave bearing, hypnotic eyes and heavy accent were instrumental in his getting the part of Dracula on Broadway, then in the classic film.

The Count covers Lugosi's professional career in great detail but remains somewhat sketchy in dealing with his four (or was it five?) marriages. His salaries were comparatively low, and he used to spend his income generously and swiftly in the neighborhood bar. At some point he began taking dope and was addicted to drugs for many years. He was the first major Hollywood figure to give himself up voluntarily for treatment and to allow the press to feast upon his vice. He died in 1956 completely broke, buried, according to his last wishes, with the Dracula cape.

Upon reading the book one has a feeling that many biographical gaps have not been filled. On the other hand, the author's critical survey of Lugosi's films is masterful. Lenning proves to be a thorough and knowledgeable cinema reviewer, covering each and every Lugosi movie with a keen analytical sense. He points out with sharp insight major achievements like *Dracula, The Black Cat, Mark of the Vampire, The Raven,* and *The Body Snatcher,* as well as the dismal failures like *Chandu the Magician, The Phantom Ship, The Invisible Ghost,* and *The Ape Man.*

Cynthia Lindsay's *Dear Boris* has the opposite objective. It is a valiant attempt to paint a personal portrait of Boris Karloff, an ultra-private, even secretive, individual, with only a nod towards his professional achievements. The author interviewed family members, friends and associates and gathered biographical data, informal tid-bits, anecdotes and private pictures.

Thus we find out that Boris Karloff, the epitome of horror, was one of filmland's most generous and gentlest actors. Born to a well established British family, he emigrated in his youth to Canada, then to the USA, working as a ditch digger and coal shoveler prior to joining touring stock companies as a performer. Then he became an extra and bit player in motion pictures, finally striking it rich with a part spurned by many other actors—the Frankenstein Monster.

Karloff's talent and sensitivity shone through the heavy make-up of the monster and started him on a prolific career that encompassed more than 160 movies, numerous stage roles (*Peter Pan, Arsenic and Old Lace, The Lark*), radio and television shows and recordings. He dedicated his life to the performing arts though he managed to find time and energy for five marriages (or was it four?).

The Count and *Dear Boris* prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that Bela Lugosi and Boris Karloff (who, by the way, never liked one another) were vulnerable, zestful and most human. Somehow, between the lines, one senses that they shared a common tragic fate: Their greatest performances—as Dracula and the Frankenstein Monster—were instrumental in steering their careers into a route of no return, capping the lid on their true potential for a fuller and higher artistic expression.

– Amnon Kabatchnik

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No Place For Murder, by George Harmon Coxe. Knopf, 1975. $6.95.

It isn't at all unusual for a detective to find a corpse in his office, but he doesn't have to like it. Jack Fenner left his office for Cape Cod one Friday in September. When he returned on Monday morning he resented the dead man in the outer office.

The probing began. Who knew Fenner would be away all weekend? As a pebble dropped into a deep, stagnant pool, the ripples spread. The stamp dealer who had an office across the hall was also killed on that weekend. A stockbroker friend of Fenner's found he had some difficult questions to answer about some missing certificates, and Fenner had only himself for a client.

Cose has often written of crimes in places with romantic far-away names. Surinam, Paramaraibo, the Bahamas. But he has also written much about New England as he does here. His deceptively simple style so often makes the characters in his stories loom larger than the places they inhabit. By contrast this novel seems filled with the place names which convey images of New England. Falmouth, Cuttyhunk, Nobska Light, the Cape. The words fill the moith with a pleasant taste.

Familiar characters from past books return, including a cameo role for Kent Murdock. How many writers have retired a hero in order to begin a new series about one of his friends?

For a modern novel of violent crime, *No Place for Murder* is a strangely non-violent story. There is the same meticulous description of scenes and emotions which has been a mark of this author's style for years. There is the same number of words (roughly in the 60,000 to 70,000 range) with which he has written every novel since he began in 1935. Here there are no scenes of real, explicit violence until the denouement. Well-written dialogue and mature themes replace the shots and punches. The old master has shown it can be done without any loss of interest.

It is possible this may be Coxe's final novel. The ideas come slower these days. If this is so, it is a good note on which to complete a career which has spanned 40 years and 62 books.

– J. Randolph Cox

The Revenge of Moriarty, by John Gardner.
G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1975; 289 pp., $8.95.

"Some time when you have a year or two to spare," Sherlock Holmes once remarked to a rising young Scotland Yard detective, "I commend to you the study of Professor Moriarty." What the Yard did not take seriously, John Gardner certainly has, and the latest result of his following Holmes's advice is this second volume in the series begun in 1974. The earlier novel was actually something of a legacy; the author was at pains to extricate the character of Moriarty—his own conception of the Napoleon of Crime, it should be remembered, not Watson's—from the definitional limits imposed by "The Final Problem" and "The Empty House." Having succeeded with the aid of his impressive knowledge of Victorian England's criminal life, Gardner has made this new volume entirely his own. In it he sends Moriarty where he wishes: deeper into the shadowy and intricate underworld of an era before scientific methods of police organization and procedure came of age.

When *The Return of Moriarty* closed, the evil genius had been frustrated in his attempt to forge a European criminal alliance under his leadership, because of the failure of his assassination plot against the Prince of Wales. He fled the country, arrived eventually in the United States with the remnants of his organization, and there, we learn (albeit too briefly to really satisfy) in *The Revenge of Moriarty*, amassed enough of a fortune through swindle and fraud to return to London in 1896 and begin to rebuild his empire. Empire-building, as many a Victorian Britisher knew at first hand, can be a pleasurably ruthless business. Six men stand out as the targets of Moriarty's vindictiveness: the two detectives, Sherlock Holmes and Angus Crow, who thwarted his plans and broke his power, and the four criminal bosses of Berlin, Paris, Rome, and Madrid who had pledged fealty only to abandon him in his hour of need.

It is an interesting aspect of Gardner's Moriarty that he expends far more energy in combatting and controlling his rivals for criminal power than he does in extirpating the forces of the law arrayed against him. To prise Crow and Holmes away from their common mission he rather contemptuously employes their own personality flaws as levers: Crow's wandering eye in a cooling marriage, and Holmes's notorious dependency upon cocaine. Crow is driven to distraction and leaves the force, Holmes enervated and then disgraced publicly through the unwitting complicity of Irene Adler. But against his colleagues in crime Moriarty goes to great lengths indeed, to impress them with his superiority, to subjugate them and draw them to his side again, or to destroy them altogether. With one after another he plays the unseen puppet-master, manipulating robbery, forgery, and seduction elaborately and adroitly, using disguise and sleight-of-hand to prove himself the master of illusion and deception.

But in the end it is Sherlock Holmes who proves to be the greatest illusionist of all. Happily there is considerably more of Holmes in this novel than there was in its predecessor, and Gardner uses him with an increasing confidence and feeling for the finer points of the character. Forming a growing partnership with Inspector Crow, the great detective transcends his preyed-upon vulnerabilities and reaches out to regain the balance with a brilliant stroke of confrontation. He succeeds to that extent, but mischance prevails nonethless and nothing is really resolved. Moriarty escapes once more with his empire substantially intact this time, and the stage is set for the third and final volume of the trilogy. For an apocalyptic battle of titans? For another Reichenbach? Only Gardner knows; for the rest of us it will take another impatient year of waiting.

— Jon L. Lellenberg

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The D'Artagnan Signature, by Robert Rostand.
G. P. Putnam's Sons, 246 p., $7.95.

It is interesting to note that while early spy thrillers, like Erskine Childers' *Riddle of the Sands* (1903) and Joseph Conrad's *Secret Agent* (1907), emphasized the patriotism of the protagonists and their fanatic devotion to their country, Rostand's latest intrigue novel deals with a quest for money. Four million dollars were deposited in a Swiss bank during the Algerian Civil War and are now the cause for a trail of mutilated bodies. A cold blooded terrorist, head of a ruthless gang and obsessed with the search for treasure, clashes with a member of the French Surete while tracking down the co-signer of a secret bank account. An American screen writer gets involved in the dangerous game and somehow, unconvincingly, proves himself a match for the professionals.

The plot's development is a bit confusing and the traditional Arab beauty functioning as part agent, part lover does not add credibility to the proceedings, but there are enough twists and surprises along the line to sustain interest.

Rostand has added to earlier ingredients of espionage literature the dimension of stark brutality –a harrowing sequence of physical torture and a succession of cruel murders. And anyone interested in opening a hush-hush bank account in Geneva should not miss this book, as it contains much fascinating information and a fool-proof plan.

— Amnon Kabatchnik

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Drummer in the Dark, by Francis Clifford.
Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1976, 181 pp. $7.95.

Francis Clifford, who died last year, was among the top five post World War II suspense fiction writers. Master of

the ironic, twist ending, his best work such as *The Naked Runner, All Men Are Lonely Now, A Wild Justice* and *Goodbye and Amen* is comparable in quality to that of Graham Greene. Like Greene, his concerns are with the interwoven themes of love and betrayal. Typically, his characters are talented amateurs floundering in the deep waters of cold blooded professionals. Caught up on the trip-wire of fate, his characters are manipulated and debased in a world where pity and trust are but words. Unable or unwilling to face the implications of their own act of betrayal, they retreat from an increasingly frightening and chaotic world, where nothing is what it seems, to the womb-like security of love. When in the end this act of faith is betrayed, the catharsis and emptiness that follows leads to the final self-betrayal of suicide.

Clifford's simple yet elegant prose style enthralls the reader in this sinister borderland of never-ending war and continuously shifting allegiances, where national security justifies any act, and treason can receive but one sentence --death.

Looking back over his past work makes the reading of Clifford's last novel, *Drummer in the Dark*, that much more disappointing. The story deals with an Irish revolutionary organization, known only as Touchbutton, that is terrorizing England. Someone is supplying it with highly sophisticated remote-control detonators. Duncan Howard, the director of Special Branch, soon narrows his suspect list down to one Martin Leach, a salesman (drummer) driving an engineering truck display in and out of Eastern Europe. As the novel, told from the viewpoint of both Howard and Leach, progresses, the reader watches as their paths inexorably converge.

As the death toll mounts into the hundreds from the terrorist bombings, Howard, obsessed with his hatred for Leach, turns the investigation into a vendetta as he attempts to prove that Leach is the traitor. Consumed by hatred, he regards any means as being justifiable as he sets the trap for Leach.

Leach, on the other hand, blinds himself to the atrocities resulting from his smuggling and becomes increasingly isolated and fearful, as Howard's vengeance encircles him. Refusing to face his own act of betrayal, he opens himself to the trust and love he has for a Polish girl. Anna Dabrowska, a government ministry secretary. The final stunning confrontation between Leach and Howard reveals that love, as well as betrayal, has its risks and that the price can be equally, if not more, devastating.

The novel suffers from the substitution of blood baths for narrative suspense and from stale, stereotyped characterization. To make matters worse, the stunning ending spoken of is taken from his earlier novel, *All Men Are Lonely Now*, as well as much of the carefully laid details that lead to the conclusion.

– Frank Eck

The Torture Doctor, by David Franke.
Hawthorn Books, 1975; 231 pp., $8.95.

The Ripper File, by Elwyn Jones & John Lloyd.
Arthur Barker Ltd., 1975; 204 pp., $7.50.

Art is said to imitate life, and great criminals sometimes inspire writers. The late Anthony Boucher, for instance, occasionally used the pen-name H. H. Holmes, borrowing the alias of one of the most terrible murderers in American criminal history. *The Torture Doctor* relates Holmes's criminal career, trial, and execution, providing the best non-fiction account to date of what Robert Bloch has called *American Gothic*. Yet the author disappoints the reader in several important ways. He makes it occasionally difficult to distinguish between what Holmes did and what people thought he might have done, while simultaneously never succeeding in making Holmes—a practiced con man and swindler and an extraordinary murderer—seem much more than commonplace. It does him an injustice, because he was not; he was, as the introduction points out, an industrious killer of harmless human beings. Franke provides little insight into the Jekyll-and-Hyde workings of a mind that could kill so many people with such calculation. By and large it is a worthwhile book as far as it goes, but it is lacking in these ways and regrettably leaves the reader with a disinterested attitude toward its subject.

This is less the case with *The Ripper File*. A genteel soap opera like *Upstairs, Downstairs* gets all the good press, but one of the best television imports from Britain in recent years was the six-part documentary series on Jack the Ripper, with BBC's fictional Scotland Yard Detective Chief Superintendents Barlow and Watt conducting the investigation. This book is the literary version of that first-rate production. It is dryer and doesn't reproduce the fascinating give and take of the television series, between phlegmatic Barlow and eager Watt, between 1975's investigation and 1888's events; but it does present in written form a valuable collection of documentation: newspaper accounts, inquest excerpts, witness statements, interviews and memoirs, and more. And like the television series, it discusses two more or less unique contributions to the still-growing field of Ripper literature—a theory that the Ripper may have been a Mason, and the possibility that the murders were connected with the so-called Cleveland Street Scandal, resulting in an official conspiracy to suppress the facts in both cases.

– Jon L. Lellenberg

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Witch House, by Evangeline Walton. pp. 185. New York. Award Books, Paperbound (ND), 95c. [Originally published 1945 by Arkham House]

The Devil's Churchyard, by Godfrey Turton. pp. 232. New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1971. Paperbound.

95c. [Originally published by Doubleday and Co., Inc. 1970]

Listen, Please, Listen, by Naomi A. Hintze. pp. 181. Bantam Books, New York, 1975. Paperbound, $1.50 [Originally published by Random House, 1974]

No. 2: The Mind Masters: Shamballah, by John F. Rossmann. pp. 220. New York, NAL: Signet Original Paperback, 1975. Paperbound, $1.25.

As one who is always drawn to mysteries with a flavor of the occult or a tinge of the Gothic, I find it hard to resist books with (to me) captivating titles. And usually I am rewarded with a genuine *frisson,* or, at the very least, "A good read." But, alas, not always.

Of the four books under consideration here (I have listed them chronologically), those by Evangeline Walton and Naomi A. Hintze struck me as outstandingly good. In both, a young mother with a fey daughter must struggle against natural and supernatural evils. Both are convincingly set in rural New England, which has, thanks to Salem, a built-in witchiness for most American readers. In both, there are explicitly supernatural or paranormal elements, though in Mrs. Hintze's book, part of the paranormal is explained, though the reason for the faking of certain phenomena is to conceal as nasty a crime as one can thing of, off-hand.

Perhaps I shall be regarded as a "female chauvinist" if I say that Mr. Turton's book is less good. A distinguished historical novelist. Mr. Turton has attempted to mingle comedy with Satanism in a way that just does not work. It is awfully hard to take seriously, and be afraid of, a clergyman of the Church of England, who has lapsed into Satanism, so descending into the ludicrous as to wear a dressing-gown of crimson satin, richly embroidered on the breast-pocket with an effigy of the "Green Man" (an enigmatic figure of British medieval folkloric tradition), given to him by an admiring widow lady, who admits it was the last, unworn birthday gift she had bought for her late husband, a wealthy and vulgar bookmaker, as a ceremonial robe for the Black Mass. One cannot imagine Dennis Wheatley letting his Satanists sink so low! Yet, Mr. Turton's book shares with *Witch House* and *Listen, Please, Listen,* good qualities: strong atmosphere, well-drawn and sympathetically handled characters, and a satisfying, neat conclusion.

As for *No. 2: The Mind Masters: Shamballah,* I must say in my defense that I bought it as one of three books for $1.00, concealed in a grab-bag at a church sale, so I did not actually *choose* it. It seemed to me a mishmash of softcore pornography and garbled occultism, with more than a nod (or so it seemed) towards many other books, including the Satanic novels of Dennis Wheatley, the *Guardians* series of Peter Saxon, and even to some of the *Man from Uncle* series, notably *No. 6, The Vampire Affair* (Ace, 1966) by David McDaniel. At the risk of branding myself as a hopelessly unregenerate, unliberated Victorian, let me advise TAD readers to avoid this book, and probably its predecessor and successors, too —if there are any.

Moral: never buy grab-bag books at a church sale . . . But perhaps the Rector? . . . Who can tell? . . . .

— Veronica M. S. Kennedy

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Short notes on more of the current crop . . .

William Marshall's *Yellowthread Street* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, $5.95) is short, chaotic, bloody, humorous, picturesque, pungent, graphic in portrayal of people and cultures, and the welcome first of a series. It's also a police procedural, set in the Yellowthread Street Police Station in the seedy Hong Bay dance-hall section of Hong Kong. Here we have the matter of American tourists, the Skilbecks, who have misplaced each other; additionally, there's the "rickshaw basher"; and the Communists have turned off the city's water. But most of all there's the Mongolian, a giant of an independent entrepreneur who's taken to extorting from local shopkeepers with threats (sometimes carried out) of chopping off said shopkeepers' valued appendages. Naturally the gangsters who run the shops take a dim view of this, and send out the troops. Squarely in between: the cops of Yellowthread Street.

The Running of Beasts by Bill Pronzini and Barry Malzberg (Putnam, $8.95) is a novel of considerable—nay, fearsome—impact, which is only moderated in retrospect by a couple of weaknesses. *Beasts* is in the Jack-the-Ripper subgenre: the small upper New York village of Bloodstone (!) is visited by a slasher, who carves up one woman after another. His performance attracts widespread attention from police and media, and occasions the retum of an old native, now a writer on assignment, who brings a psychiatrist in tow. The latter eagerly declaims his theory: that the present Ripper could be anybody, and that in the "normal" compartments of his brain he doesn't even know what he's done. We meet others of the cast: two policemen compulsively, competitively searching for the killer; the local newspaperman; his mistress; her son, who's writing an autobiographical novel about the incidents; and a New York City native who supports himself by playing the horses. A very effective and disturbing story, as I've indicated, but beset by two flaws: in view of the nature of the crimes, there is really only one credible suspect; and an encounter between the killer and his last victim leads the reader away from suspecting the truth, but does so only by being unlikely in one crucial respect.

I trust that when the MWA comes to hand out its first novel Edgar for 1976, Steve Knickmeyer's *Straight* (Random House, $6.95) will get a long look. Knickmeyer writes very well: memorable characterizations, a suitably complex plot, and spare, ironic prose. Straight was a cop until a bomb meant for him blew his wife apart; then he became a hit man. He's now been declared surplus by his masters and sent on his

last assignment, to Solano, Oklahoma. Cranmer is a private investigator who lives with pain and Demerol; he has an offbeat partner named Maneri. They're hired to see why (if) a Solano businessman—a holdout in a government funded building project—committed messy suicide. Things rapidly get quite a lot messier. . . .

Ted Willis' first book to reach our shores, *Westminster One* (1975), was quite good, but his latest, *The Left-Handed Sleeper* (Putnam, $7.95) is distinctly better. Here we have careful characterization integral to a sound, plausible plot, with the whole nicely written. One day Mark Ritchie, Conservative M.P., disappears, and it turns out M.I.5 has had its eye on him for some time as a Soviet sleeper agent. Ritchie's wife Christine, happily married these eight years, won't accept what M.I.5 agent Pat Cadwell tells her, but evidence mounts—while Christine and Pat, though fundamentally antagonists, are responding to each other in their own ways. And letting their humanity rule their actions at seemingly inopportune moments. Meanwhile, it appears that M.I.5 is not the only organization determined to lay (ungentle) hands on the missing Ritchie. . . .

John T. McLaren is off the beaten track for a private detective, and so in interesting respects is his first recorded case, *Death Has a Thousand Doors,* by Will Cooper (Bobbs-Merrill, $7.95). McLaren owns a valley out west, a valley which has been in his family for generations and which to him is home. He's a war veteran with no regular income who turns to crime investigation to pay the bills. Here Senator Latham Cameron has just been arrested for killing the prostitute who has been his mistress for months—except the senator says it's all a frame and he never even laid eyes on the woman. Enter McLaren, who has to figure out why someone would shell out 100 grand for an elaborate game—and who that someone is. McLaren brings in a couple of buddies for help in stirring the pot, which quickly rises to the boil. Pleasant reading, this; I could bear more of McLaren, who doesn't come even close to bedding anyone and who is looking for—of all things—a wife!

The latest in the Bookfinger reprints is Jack Mann's *Nightmare Farm* ($5.00; Box 522, Wyckoff Hgts. Sta., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11237). This is another case for psychic detective Gees, who here takes on a covey of "malevolences" resident in Knightsmere Farm, in Shropshire. They are capable of entering humans and controlling them—and destroying them, as Gees comes to learn to his personal horror. *Farm* tends to be overly discursive, but it does develop a notable impact before it's done.

Arthur Kaplan's *A Killing for Charity* (Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, $7.95) introduces a new female private eye, Charity Bay, whose morals are on a low par with those of her masculine counterparts (a strike for women's lib?). At any rate, someone with apparent inside information is robbing and killing New York diamond merchants, and Charity ultimately parlays a minor incongruity into a final resolution. Agreeable enough, but the ending is more brutal than necessary.

Not far off Dick Francis' best form is *High Stakes* (Harper & Row, $7.95) in which a young, wealthy and naive horse owner finally discovers that his trainer and bookmaker have efficiently taken him to the cleaners—without leaving proof of their perfidy. The scheme has to do with switching horses in races in counterpoint to said owner's bets, and said owner (with an unlikely assortment of friends) devises a deadly punishment to suit the crime. You'll want to read this at one sitting.

You can safely avoid *The Baby Sitter* (Walker, $7.95) by Robert Boyle, an unpolished affair about a nogoodnik who uses his mistress' babysitting jobs for leads to blackmail targets.

Jackdaw by Christopher Hill (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, $6.95) is British suspense of a rather unfocussed sort. Tony Grainger, having dried up after one novel, hies himself to rural France to recapture the muse. He rents a house with a peculiar and bloody past, and, as it develops, a peculiar and bloody present.

The writing in P. F. Kluge's *The Day That I Die* (Bobbs-Merrill, $7.95) is competent enough, but I hohummed my way through it. Booker, a free-lance writer, goes to the Pacific island of Pelelieu, a WW II battleground that has just claimed another life. There's a local industry in bones, but Booker has the ill-fortune to stick his nose into something even nastier.

It eventually turns out that *See How They Run* by William M. Green (Bobbs-Merrill, $7.95) is a satire—a sometimes humorous and cumulatively biting satire—on internal U.S. intelligence activities. The head of a security agency has cemented his position by developing intensely embarrassing files on everyone who is or might become somebody. Then he has a stroke, and one of the files disappears. Quick: everybody look for the file!

R. E. Harrington's *The Seven of Swords* (Putnam, $7.95) is a good deal more imaginative than the usual intrigue novel, but I was put off by the gobs of unnecessary sex and the fact I anticipated the ending almost from the beginning. To escape the KGB, our protagonist, mentally warped since childhood, works his way into a U.S. military experiment in extreme behavior modification techniques. Therein he finds ways to turn everything—*almost* everything—to his own advantage. . . .

A cop looking for a way to retire on higher pay is *Baroni* (Putnam, $7.95), and author Alfred Harris has some fun with the syndicate and a police department riddled with naked ambition. Baroni needs to crack a case quickly—but his boss and the local crime kingpin both regard him as a prime threat. Not surprisingly, and not entirely convincingly, Baroni comes out on top. . . .

Edmund Cooper's *Prisoner of Fire* (Walker, $6.95) is billed as suspense, but is mostly science fiction, dealing

effectively with a deadly battle for control of paranormal children in the England of 1990.

Jeffrey Ashford can write well, but *Three Layers of Guilt* (Walker, $6.95) has an unfinished air and you can give it a pass. Harry Miles, whose life is in ruins, stumbles into even more trouble—a murder game, in which he's "it."

A Big Wind for Summer (Harper & Row, $6.95) is well below par for Gavin Black's series about Paul Harris: the plot never develops a head of steam, and Black has to rely on the elements to bail him out. Harris is lured to the Scottish Island of Arran, where he gets mixed up in an old woman's ideas about the value of an elderly painting she owns. There's not a really likeable character in the entire affair.

Either an attack on the idiocies of British law and judges, or a tribute to the strength of British justice—this is *The Chameleon Course* by Donald Seaman (Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, $8.95). Slow moving but effective either way. Circumstances conspire to push a Russian scientist, secreted in Britain, into the limelight so the KGB can take aim. And aim it does, as British Intelligence counterplans furiously.

J. Randolph Cox's *New Nick Carter Weekly* ($2.00; wraps; 64 pp.; Edward T. LeBlanc, 87 School St., Fall River, Mass. 02720) is a very fine bibliographic listing of that turn-of-the-century dime novel. The listing itself is annotated in part and identifies nearly all the authors of the anonymously published stories, and it is preceded by illuminating discussions of the *Weekly*, authorship, and reprinting practices. Illustrated.

To my knowledge, *The Detective Story*, "An Introduction to the Whodunit" by Saul Schwartz, is the first of the recently flourishing crop of texts which is designed particularly for high school use (National Textbook Co., 8259 Niles Center Road, Skokie, Ill. 60076; softcover; 442 pp.; $6.65 the single copy; $4.99 each for 5 copies or more). I am ill-equipped to judge such texts as such, but Schwartz seems knowledgeable of the field: his commentary and student exercises, scattered throughout the work, are much to the point. Emphasis is placed on Poe, Doyle, and Queen, with 22 stories included in all, along with Notes and Bibliography. I spotted a few errors (some careless, like E. F. Bleiler at least twice becoming E. F. Bluler), but on the whole this seems quite a useful volume.

The Affair of the Scarlet Crab by Clifford Knight (Dodd, Mead, 1937)

It is surprising that a puzzle-maker as prolific and (in his time) as popular as Clifford Knight was totally ignored by Barzun and Taylor in *Catalogue of Crime*, especially since Knight was so much a formalist as to include in his early books an index of clues, a device similar to that used by C. Daly King. Such a devotion to the nuts and bolts of detection should have endeared him to the traditionalists B. and T.

Knight's first mystery was the first winnder of Dodd Mead's $2,000 Red Badge mystery prize, winning out over a field of more than 300 entries. Knight's recurring sleuth, English Prof. Huntoon Rogers, an amiable and not too strikingly colorful character memorable mainly for his protruding ears, goes along on a scientific cruise to the Galapagos Islands. Amateur ornithologist Benny Bartlett serves as Watson-narrator. In this first novel of the series, the reader has no way of knowing at the outset whether Rogers will be victim, suspect, killer or detective.

The tangled relationships of millionaire yachtsman Carlos Lanfrey, his wife, and their assorted passengers—including feuding scientists, a gambling photographer, and a beautiful young artist—make for a promising closed-circle whodunit, and Knight plays fair with the reader. But in the long run, it is a fairly undistinguished 1930's mystery. The Clue Index is disappointing, mostly pointing out facts from the text not inconsistent with the killer's guilt, as opposed to clues that definitely point to it. The book is a reasonable way to kill a couple hours, but it seems a surprising prize-winner. It would be interesting to know what some of the losers were and if they ever achieved book publication.

—Jon L. Breen

The Affair of the Ginger Lei by Clifford Knight (Dodd, Mead, 1938)

Prof. Huntoon Rogers continues to be an amiable, likeable investigator with all the color and individuality of Carolyn Wells' Fleming Stone. This time the narrator is Perry Williams, quite similar to Benny Bartlett in all but his name. The first fifty pages presents a well-described L.A. to Hawaii yacht race. Knight specialized in seagoing and outdoorsy backgrounds and did them very well.

The murder of diabetic navigator Sam Porter at the end of the *Aleelah's* cruise is very cleverly done, and the large cast of suspects comes from within and without the yacht's crew. The rest of the story takes place mostly in Hawaii, with the Hawaiian police only slightly indebted to Charlie Chan in characterization, and it all ends with a classical gathering-of-the-suspects, with wounded Rogers presiding from a sickbed, going around the room and presenting the case against each character in turn before putting his finger on the real murderer. The Clue Index convinces the reader that the whole book was consistent with the killer's identity.

Ginger Lei is a better mystery than Knight's award winner, and in later books he would do better still. Through careful craftsmanship and a special knack for presenting natural settings, Knight produced a competent series of mysteries that deserves rediscovery.

–Jon L. Breen

NO. 19 by Edgar Jepson. Mills, 1910. U.S. title: *The Garden at No. 19,* Wessels, 1910.

John Plowden, who works in his cousin's law office, is young and fairly ambitious, but not too well off financially.

A flutter in the stock market (on margin) brings an unexpected windfall, and Plowden is able to buy a house in Hertford Park at 20 Walden Road. He hopes to be able to live in a civilized manner and pursue his hobby of reading–with time out for tennis several nights a week at a nearby club.

Unfortunately, there are a few disquieting incidents next door in *The Garden at No. 19* to mar Plowden's serenity.

There is the strange, frightening animalistic sound that is augmented by a rather loathsome smell. There is also an occasional loud roaring noise that provokes terror in the middle of the night.

But all is not negative. The garden provides the lovely and elfin Pamella Woodfell, and I think you can guess what her relationship will be with Plowden.

It seems that Pamella's uncle and guardian has spent many years trying to penetrate the secret of the old, almost forgotten, Mysteries. He is getting very close in the rites he and a select group of initiates celebrate every month at the full moon. He hopes an added refinement will enable him to achieve his desire, but his health is rapidly deteriorating and he may not be able to control the unnamable forces that he is striving to unleash.

There is also no Carnacki (who made his debut at this time) available to come along and exorcise the forces that are doing their best to break through the "barrier."

The author, father of the better-known mystery writer Selwyn Jepson, is perhaps best known for his collaboration with Maurice Leblanc in the novelization of the play *Arsene Lupin.*

Garden is a steadily engrossing novel, and one that is very difficult to put down. Disbelief is suspended, and the elements of suspense and horror are effectively managed and well-balanced by the romantic interest which is not obtrusive, but a vital element in terms of plot and characterization.

I'm informed that Jepson was plagued by a tendency to infect an unfortunate amount of humor into his later mystery and detective stories. Fortunately, he has restrained himself here, and approached this novel with a high degree of seriousness. The result is a rewarding and highly meritorious work.

–Charles Shibuk

Last Will and Testament by G.D.H. Cole and Margaret Cole; Doubleday, Doran, 1936.

Haycraft says of the Coles their books are "extremely uneven," "tedious," and the "dullest" of the British police novels. Barzun and Taylor echo the word "dull" in writing of this particular volume. They are right–but they miss the point.

With the chroniclers of our genre so forthrightly uniform in their judgment, I hardly thought it likely I would ever finish the 301 pages of *Last Will and Testament.* In fact, a mountain of persistence was required just to wade through the first two or three chapters. I was told this was the second of two volumes dealing with the saga of the Pendexter family, and while there were repeated references to the first volume, I was assured the second episode was entirely self-contained. All I had to do was work out the intertwined relationships of the Damians, a family whose head, Lord St. Baizey, was about to die under questionable circumstances, and the Pendexters who had been suspected of murder in the first volume and would likely be in for the same treatment in the second. Altogether a pretty inauspicious beginning.

What kept me going was hardly the private detective, one Dr. Benjamin Tancred, who turned out to be so featureless he made Inspector French seem the quintessence of eccentricity. I can recall nothing of Tancred's personality, still less of his Watson, someone called Paul Graham. The resemblance to a Freeman Wills Crofts novel was enhanced when it became apparent that one Rupert Pendexter had pretty certainly killed his father-in-law while the latter was out riding on his estate. The problem was to break the alibi. However, it took a considerable number of pages just to be reasonably sure the death was actually a murder, and then the investigation had to cut through a threat of divorce, a second murder, and the problems engendered by a tramp who twice changed his story!

The slow pace was furthered by the questionable logic of the non-dynamic detectives. The second murder is brushed aside; it will be solved when the first is unraveled. Actually the second would appear the easier of solution, and that solution would effectively solve the first.

So what kept me reading?

If this novel is not a classic, and it surely isn't, it is in the classic tradition. The murders may not be in the library of the manor house, but they are on the grounds.

The exepcted two maps are necessary, exceedingly necessary to visualize the setting. Bit by bit our detectives gather the facts, and ever so slowly the picture begins to clear. It is a familiar routine, but there are just enough variations to keep one plodding along. As with a sonnet, the form is rigid; the pleasure comes with the appreciation of the subtle deviations from the expected. But the greatest joy still lies in the future—thanks to this second-rate novel, my next Crofts will be positively delicious. Taste and discrimination are the products of contrast, and contrast with the first-rate the Coles have amply provided.

—James Kingman

Holiday Homicide by Rufus King (Doubleday, Doran - Crime Club, 1940)

In 1940, either Rufus King, his publishers, or his public (maybe all three) had grown tired of the long-running and popular detective Lt. Valcour, so King appeared with what was to be the first of a new series starring rare nut fancier Cotton Moon and his bartender-secretary-Watson Bert Stanley. Moon charges fantastic fees for his murder investigations in order to finance his rare nut collection. Consider this sample of Stanley's narrative: "Moon wanted the Pekea nuts very badly, to use in a recipe for a new soup, and the nuts won. He stayed on the case." (p. 18)

Moon is given to reading a book in mid-investigation. At one point, the murderer conveys a death-threat to Moon via underlined words in his copy of Richard Hughes' *A High Wind in Jamaica,* precipitating the following from Stanley:

> I said that as threat notes go this number was pretty clever, what with the only thing that could be analyzed being the lead marks of the pencil, and that being impossible except for a wizard, and who ever heard anyhow of going up to suspect after suspect and saying: "Lend me your pencil because . . ." Which was where Moon shut me up. (p. 185)

Does all this sound the least bit familiar? Stanley's style of writing and Moon's style of speaking ("It smacks of evasion, but not provably so," p. 21) convince the reader that King's novel is a conscious pastiche of Rex Stout and that Chip Harrison's (Lawrence Block's) Leo Haig is not the first intentional Nero Wolfe imitator in mystery fiction.

Consider the similarities of Moon and Wolfe: both are gourmets; both employ secretary-Watsons and chefs; both do detective work mainly to support expensive tastes and esoteric hobbies; both speak in a precise, pedantic manner with a highly selective use of slang; both can halt their investigations to calmly read books; both rely on their assistants to take care of potentially unpleasant or embarrassing situations while they retire (i.e., hide).

There are, however, many differences as well. Moon is much more active than Wolfe, travelling the seven seas in his own boat (the *Coquilla)* in search of nuts. (The nautical setting, of course, was a King specialty.) Moon is a Virginian, at times oozing southern charm, while Wolfe is a native of Montenegro. Moon is never described as being overweight. (Indeed, I don't think he is described at all.) Moon is generally better tempered, less irascible, more charming and socially able, more playful. When you come down to it, he is hardly like Wolfe at all. However, he never emerges as an individual in his own right, and therein lies the problem and the probable reason why *Holiday Homicide* turned out to be, as far as I know, his only case.

Moon investigates the murder of Myron Jettwick, "the prize real estate operator and heel" (p. 1), on his 200-foot yacht, the *Trade Wind.* The client (at $30,000 plus expenses) is nephew-stepson Bruce Jettwick, the obvious suspect. A Brazilian nut, the sapucaia, is vital to the plot. Surprisingly the climax lacks the traditional Wolfean gathering-of-the-suspects.

On balance, this novel cannot be called a success, but it is worth reading as a curiosity. Old pro King knew how to do a neat plot, and Stanley's narration, though falling short of Goodwin's, contains many funny lines, along with descriptions of food and recipes for drink.

– Jon L. Breen

Fear Stalks the Village by Ethel Lina White. Harper, 1932.

Ethel Lina White is seldom described in any of the standard mystery references except as the author of *The Wheel Spins,* which Hitchcock used as the basis of *The Lady Vanishes.* Barzun and Taylor write of her ". . . indifferent loose-weave tales of adventure," and Sandoe, in a similar vein, of her "tryingly inefficient tales of terror."

Yet, I found her *Put Out the Light* (1933) to be excellent when I read it 25 years ago. Now, reading White's first book, *Fear Stalks the Village,* confirms my original impression and makes me wonder why people who usually know better have so neglected her early work. *Fear* is a book which would not have embarrassed Francis Iles or Josephine Tey. I choose them because it is the sort of mystery which might have resulted if they had ever collaborated. Though there is an amateur detective, Ignatius Jones, a wealthy young man of the Fortune-Wimsey-Campion school, this is as much a crime novel as a detective story.

White's titular community is one in which many of the inhabitants receive anonymous hate mail. There is violent death which may or may not be connected. The cast is familiar (the Rector, the Squire, the local doctor, assorted wealthy people and their paid companions et al), and yet each member soon becomes an individual. White creates a subtle atmosphere of doom around her personae, but she writes with a subtle humor which relieves the tension at appropriate moments. She builds nicely to a dramatic climax and finally offers a fair, satisfying, yet difficult-to-guess solution.

– Marvin Lachman

A Bride from the Sea by Guy Boothby. Long, 1904.

The time is 1589—one year after England's resounding

defeat of the Spanish Armada. A terrific storm wrecks a ship near the Devon coast. The aged Sir Matthew Penniston (owner of the nearby estate), his son Gilbert, and their retainers rush out to the scene of the tragedy to see if they can render aid to any survivors.

They encounter several dead bodies washed ashore, and a very live and beautiful girl who is Spanish, speaks no English, and has amnesia. She is taken into his household by Sir Matthew to recuperate from her ordeal. She is renamed Elizabeth and eventually becomes a permanent part of the household. Gilbert falls in love with her, but the course of true love never runs smoothly.

Sir Humphrey Deverell, a childhood friend of Gilbert, visits the Pennistons and obviously covets Elizabeth. Much more ominous is the bearded foreigner whose deadly assaults nearly take two lives. Everything comes to a head when Elizabeth is abducted by a group of Spaniards. It is now Gilbert's mission in life to find his beloved and provide a satisfactory conclusion to this tale of adventure via marriage.

A Bride from the Sea is narrated by its hero, Gilbert Penniston, at a pace that moves with the serenity of a snail. There is also a bit too much description (by today's standards only) that tends to prevent the story from moving forward. Symptomatic of these "problems" is a three- or four-page sequence wherein Sir Matthew must tell his son a long story without being able to get to the main point and just say that Elizabeth has been kidnapped.

This might sound discouraging, but Boothby is too good a writer to let his story be hampered by these apparent flaws. His narrative skill is subtle enough to capture the reader's attention and prevent him from becoming too concerned with the slow development and lack of fast-moving action.

The storm and shipwreck sequences at the beginning are told with a great deal of power, and there is real suspense in the closing chapters as the protagonist approaches his goal.

Boothby is noted as the creator of Dr. Nikola, a precursor of Dr. Fu Manchu, and for his adventure stories. I've read half-a-dozen of his novels and found them all to be worthwhile. When approached with a slight degree of patience, Boothby's work is both stimulating and rewarding.

– Charles Shibuk

The Second Shot by Anthony Berkeley, London, 1930.

As a critical amusement, the classic mystery writers may be divided into (a) those who "developed" and (b) those who established their criminal authority with their first books, on which thereafter they did few or many fresh variations. This is not a qualitative distinction. Class (b) includes not only Chesterton and Chandler, but more surprisingly even Simenon, considered strictly as a Maigret man.

For Class (a), the stock example during the "Golden Age" of the traditional purist British novel would no doubt be Dorothy L. Sayers. A less banal example from this era is perhaps A. B. Cox during his 1929-32 mutation from "Anthony Berkeley" to the double-threat: "Berkeley"/ "Francis Iles." Cox's restlessness with the traditional mystery form surfaced with his famous '29 expansion of a short story, "Avenging Chance," into *The Poisoned Chocolates Case*. The six equivalent solutions to the same puzzle and *Chocolates'* post-*Trent* sendup of its official Great Detective, suggest a growing impatience with the form. As we know, the happy eventuality was two (1931-2) classics of the modern thriller by "Iles": *Malice Aforethought* and *Before the Fact*.

Paradoxically, these straight crime novels were produced by "Berkeley's" tinkering with the standard British countryhouse murder format, and seeking a fresh point-of-view for its narration: in *Malice*, the murderer; and in *Fact*, the victim. Published previously, in 1930, *Shot* is one of the two "hinge" Berkeley's joining *Chocolates'* detection to *Malice's* thrills. Sheringham gets here another version of the Philip Trent treatment he took in *Chocolates*; but what concerns Berkeley is another attempt to solve the point-of-view problem.

Shot has an historically important preface (pp. 7-9), in which "Berkeley" took up some of the technical matters on Cox's mind; but the preface is unfortunately misleading about where the interest lies in the novel being prefaced. Hypothetically, the preface was composed after a rereading of the completed Ms., because the preface makes the same complaint that Julian Symons was still making 30 years later: that the murder-puzzle novel sacrifices the narrative tensions of the fictional "problem" it discusses, by turning to an investigation of the death of (only) one of the characters. This definitely happens in *Shot*. In its first 100 pre-murder pages, the hostess at a Devonshire estate includes in her weekend-guest list an ex-lover. He is a virile cashless womanizer with his eye on a willing young heiress, also a guest. This opening situation with no added homicide –has produced 100-plus countryhouse novels from Peacock to James to Sagan – let alone classic films by Bergman, Renoir, Rohmer and Bresson.

For the purist mystery reader, though, *Shot's* next 200 pages develop other technical interests not seriously discussed in the preface. What "Berkeley" worked out was a way to put the Pirandello atmosphere of the purist mystery to work within his plot. Let me try to explain, without spoiling any of his novel's surprises. His scheming hostess invents a detective party-game; the villain, Eric, is unanimously cast for the "victim." As "motivation" for his "murder," the hostess carefully supplies a description of the "victim's" past meant to open the eyes of the (formally) innocent heiress.

The reader will anticipate the party-murder's being the cover for Eric's real killing; but perhaps not the double cover whereby Berkeley's description of the "party-murder" enables him to tell the reader more or less literally whodunit yet maintain his detective mystery until the final epilogue. *Shot* also puts the traditional unbelievabilities of

the form to use as part of the actual murder-scheme. What are they? Surely one would include the closed circle of suspects, each with adequate homicidal motives; the diagrammed murder-plan that doesn't unscramble when put into effect; and finally the Watsonian narrator who reports data without properly interpreting it for the reader (and thereby breaks the Jamesian rule about an adequately perceptive narrator for serious fiction). *Shot* integrates all these "flaws" into its plot; one could become more admiringly detailed if the book were not (in the States) still something of a sleeper, so that one cannot properly discuss its solution.

– J. M. Purcell

Consider Your Verdict by Tally Mason (August Derleth). Stackpole, 1937.

Dr. Everett Webster is 6 feet tall, large-boned and heavy, with tousled greying hair, drowsy yellow eyes, and a badly trimmed walrus mustache. He isn't a dapper or imposing figure, but his professional duty is to act as coroner at all inquests. He'd much rather be outdoors enjoying the glories of nature which he admires, and he'd also prefer to avoid the presence of his professional colleague– the often obnoxious District Attorney Anthony Cardin.

Dr. Webster has stated the secret of his professional success: "A man must learn how to listen and how to put together what he hears. If there is a flaw in the evidence, the alert listener should see it." Webster does listen very carefully, but there are times when he appears to be more asleep than awake.

In this collection the coroner has ten cases brought before him. He hears the testimony of all the witnesses and frequently asked pointed and intelligent questions.

The inquest is either adjourned or an open verdict is given. Webster will then confer privately with the District Attorney whose opinion is always incorrect. Webster will then reveal the identity of the guilty party and perhaps suggest where concrete evidence might be found.

There the story halts and a challenge to the reader is issued. He (or she) will be invited to indicate exactly what statement made by the culprit while giving evidence was enough to incriminate him in Dr. Webster's probing eye and mind.

In a special section at the end of this volume (sealed at the time of original publication) Dr. Webster tells Cardin exactly where and how the criminals own evidence proclaimed his guilt in each story.

Although neglected by Ellery Queen (who frequently specialized in this type of challenge) in *The Detective Short Story: A Bibliography*, here is a rare opportunity to match your deductive prowess against the ingenious creator of the inimitable Solar Pons.

–Charles Shibuk

McLean Deduces by George Goodchild. Hodder & Stoughton, 1940.

As a reference-source on the British mystery short writer, George Goodchild, *A Catalogue of Crime* is characteristically dismissive, patronizing and useful (on Goodchild's pseudonyms, for instance). The original publication of *McLean Deduces* ('40) coincides with William McHarg's selection from his O'Malley series for *Collier's*, as *Affairs of O'Malley*. And while there were at least five McLean collections and unhappily one one O'Malley, both authors represent, probably adequately, the pre-war level of sophistication reached by the purist mystery in the popular magazines of N.Y. and of London. My remarks below are limited to *McLean Deduces*.

The seventeen stories here collected contain many social references in plot and background to the twilight post-Munish, pre-Dunkerque stage of "peace" and early "war" in Britain. But the stories that actually concern espionage (II, XV) or at least have a military background (XI) are obviously written for a readership interested in a puzzle or at least orthodox peacetime police-thriller chills (II). No moral sophistication nor interest of the Ambler-Greene type in a politicalized social atmosphere should be sought. In 1940, *McLean Deduces* was as escapist as Wodehouse or a Mozart opera. What the book demonstrates is how a pre-war pro like Goodchild, averaging only 15 pages per tale, could summarize all the basic tradition of the contemporary British crime-mystery story. No wonder Barzun and Taylor are unenthusiastic about a writer who can capsule all their pet '30's British mysteries into 15 pages apiece!

The straight pre-war thriller *a la* Edgar Wallace was a pretty thin form even back when Wallace himself was still writing them; and I suspect that Story XVI–all the *McLean Deduces* stories are numbered, not titled–that Story XVI owes its inferiority as much to a bad narrative tradition as to Goodchild's own limitations. This is one about a beautiful young abducted prosecution witness, who ends up after 17 pages gagged-bound-terrified-rescued in a boathouse. In 1940, she was of course physically intact, due more to the unconscious gallantry of the literary "villains" of the era than to the protective incompetence of the "heroes."

Fortunately, the Insp. McLean and Sgt. Brook of this story undergo some sort of offstage reverse lobotomy–in Story XVI they lose a key trial witness within an hour of locating and interviewing her, from a tea room!–and they operate in Stories I-XV, XVII with competence. As I say, these stories commemorate the various plots and traditions of the contemporary British mystery. A seemingly stock-parts story like XIII is especially impressive technically, in the way it absorbs all the key elements of a standard Carr-Dickson British countryhouse-family scandal-colonial avenger plot within 14 pages. Goodchild has here reduced what 30 to 40 years ago meant three to four hours' bedside reading to the length of reading time occupied by the 1940 evening ride home on the Underground.

With the same proficiency, *McLean Deduces* covers

such plots as: the pro criminal as cover (XVII); the double-bluff impersonation (III); the film-star's stolen jewels (I); and as many more of the stock, durable traditions as a reader might reasonably expect from half a dozen hardbound 'tecs. Goodchild's main limitations all concern a lack of variety in his approach. He can't solve the purely technical problem of smuggling the villain into the first page of a mystery short, so that he invents the investigative mystery, so to speak, by sheer technical incompetence. And his stolid, underestimated prose cannot adapt to the special plot of Story XII, where McLean and Brook ride out into the British countryside to deal with a wave of criminal assaults: in bikes and wearing female dress.

– J. M. Purcell

The Inverness Murder by Charles Alma Byers. Dial Press, 1935.

In this, Byers' only mystery, retired inspector and now amateur criminologist Warren Bayne and his assistant Seagrave go to Castle Thor in Hollywood to investigate the mysterious slayings of dogs kept by proprietor Rufus Thorne.

Dogs continue to die mysterioursly, and Thorne narrowly misses being killed; finally a series of murders takes place among the entourage employed by Thorne.

The possible suspects are a large and varied lot, both denizens of the Castle and outsiders. Finally Bayne ties together the human and canine deaths and solves the case, without the aid of the police, who are also rummaging about.

The bizarre castle settings, the colorful entourage and visitors, all contribute to this excellent and suspenseful mystery, which reminded me of Van Dine's *Green* and *Bishop* cases. Seagrave always asks the right questions and never bumbles as he relates the story in Watson fashion. The novel is so designed that each chapter has an adventure all its own, so that the total effect is that of the serial cliffhanger. And Byers weaves his plot with pleasant and continuous dialogue.

– Hal Brodsky

Murder in the Family By James Ronald. Lane, 1936; Lippincott, 1940; Belmont, 1964; King Features Syndicate, 1939, revised as *Trial Without Jury*.

Stephen Osborne is dismissed by his employer after 24 years of faithful clerical service. It is the summer of 1936 and England is in a state of deep depression; unemployment is rife and Osborne's skills are minimal; his prospects are nil.

He returns home to his wife and five children in the small, sleepy village picturesquely named Gay Ladies, and tells Mrs. Osborne all.

There is one ray of hope. Osborne has a rich but difficult sister, Octavia, who had inherited all their father's considerable wealth, and is under a moral obligation to share her riches with Osborne.

Octavia's annual visit occurs the next day, and Mrs. Osborne appeals for financial aid. Octavia, who is an absolute bitch, heartlessly refuses, and casts aspersions on the characters of all the Osbornes.

Octavia is ordered to leave, but is strangled (a richly deserved fate!) before she can set out on her journey.

The police investigate and the finger of suspicion points in many directions, but no solid clue emerges to fasten guilt where it belongs.

The Osbornes' previously happy home life is rudely shattered. They are focal points of objectionable and unhealthy interest by many citizens. Anonymous letters appear in increasing numbers.

Weeks later the sensation fades. The murder is still unresolved, but the Osborne family slowly returns to a semblance of tranquility.

The appearance of a newspaper story about the Osbornes precipitates a new crisis. Tension increases to an unbearable degree. A tragedy occurs. The police are presented with several confessions.

Finally, a character barges in on the police, and becomes the least-likely detective when he reveals the identity of the equally least-likely murderer.

This is a novel that is an absolute pleasure to read from first page to last. It is written in a simple and straightforward style that is uncluttered with lengthy descriptions of inessentials. Its people are warm and very appealing, and the author convinces the reader of their strong family feeling, and evokes great empathy for their problems.

The puzzle is an excellent one, and so deceptively clued that even veteran readers will be taken in by this author's artful misdirection.

Murder in the Family is a novel of considerable merit and great readability. Marvin Lachman informs me that Ronald's *They Can't Hang Me* (1938), an early Popular Library reprint, is of equal statute. Obviously, Ronald's other work would be well-worth seeking out.

– Charles Shibuk

Death Out of Thin Air (Coward, McCann, 1941) and *Death from Nowhere* (Wiegers' "Yogi Mysteries") by Stuart Towne (Clayton Rawson).

These titles each contain two Don Diavolo mysteries by the creator of The Great Merlini. Originally "pulplications," they remain thoroughly entertaining and readable diversions. For those unfamiliar with Don Diavolo, he is an illusionist who gets involved in crimes that to Inspector Church of Homicide only a magician could commit. As with most pulp heroes, Diavolo has a regular stock company of associates: twin sisters Pat and Mickey Collins; half-Indian and half-Chinese assistant Chan Chandara Manchu; engineering genius and illusion designer Karl Hartz; ace reporter Woody Haines; and professional gambler The Horseshoe Kid.

In "Ghost of the Undead," the first novelist in *Death Out of Thin Air,* Diavolo must solve a murder committed in his own backstage dressing-room apparently by a vampire

conjured up during a seance. There are jewel thefts, "impossible" disappearances, and a dying message clue.

In the title novelet, an invisible man murders a detective at police headquarters and then challenges Diavolo to find him.

Death from Nowhere contains two untitled novelets. In the first, Diavolo is neatly framed for the murder of a circus impresario hated by one and all.

The second novelet begins with Diavolo accepting a $10,000 bet that he can expose a Hindu fakir and leads to an "impossible" murder which really is "impossible."

In these days of police procedurals, psychological thrillers, thud-and-blunder private eye novels, and "who-dunits" that really aren't, it is refreshing to discover mysteries that mystify, that are written to entertain rather than just to make a buck.

– Angelo Panagos

The Orange Axe by Brian Flynn. Lane, 1931.

When reviewing *The Mystery of the Peacock's Eye* (1928) in TAD V. 7 N. 1 p. 53, I ventured to suggest that Flynn's early work might have merit. This impression has been strengthened by a perusal of *The Case of the Black 22* (1928), *The Spiked Lion* (1933), *The Sussex Cuckoo* (1935), and the novel under discussion here.

The early chapters of *The Orange Axe* detail a conspiracy to eliminate one André de Ravenac, a vicious blackmailer and possible multiple murderer, via a series of mutual alibis built upon a lottery drawing.

We switch to a crowded and glittering reception for a distinguished foreign dignitary. A scream rings out and De Ravenac is found murdered. The slightly pompous Commissioner of Police, Sir Austin Kemble, is among the guests and takes charge of the investigation aided by his hard-working subordinate, Inspector Hargreaves.

The guest of honor, fearing a plot against himself and his country, persuades Sir Austin to summon "your finest English detective," and Anthony Lotherington Bathurst, Flynn's series detective and a personal friend of Sir Austin, appears on the scene immediately.

Information is sought everywhere. Guests and witnesses are examined; alibis are carefully scrutinized. The investigation at the scene of the crime takes up a disproportionate number of pages, but Flynn, skilled craftsman that he is, never allows reader attention to wane. But little progress is made and no conclusion is in sight.

The next day Bathurst is visited by de Ravenac's mistress, who bears important information. She very soon discovers that she knows more than is good for her. She determines to flee to Paris, but death intervenes and leaves a piece of silk picturing an orange axe.

Can this murder be a part of the conspiracy that has been introduced to the reader, or has a separate murderer anticipated its plans? The British sleuths continue to investigate and are given substantial additional information by the Sûreté. In the meantime, Bathurst's labors are beginning to give him glimmerings of the truth.

The right question at the perfect moment reveals all to Bathurst, who now determines to set a trap for a curious killer. He discovers that his plans have been anticipated. and the tables are turned on him in a suspenseful, violent, and near-fatal encounter that reveals a murderer who is (to this reader, at least) one of the most least-likely suspects of all time.

The Orange Axe is highly readable, steadily engrossing, well-plotted, and very deceptively clued by Flynn, who has taken great pains to effectively disguise his hidden villain.

– Charles Shibuk

Death in the Dark by Stacey Bishop. Faber & Faber, London, 1930.

It is very possible that *Death in the Dark* was initially meant as a parody, poking fun at the super-intellectual detective novel of the time and concentrating its satirical darts on S. S. Van Dine and the eccentric Philo Vance.

At the start there is a list of characters and a capsule description of each, a detailed map of the scene of the crime, and an introductory chapter promising bizarre and puzzling murders. There is an amateur detective, Stephen Bayard, who has helped the Public Prosecutor of New York City in a number of difficult cases. Stephen is a criminologist with long-winded, overly complicated logical theories who digresses from time to time to lecture on poetry and classical music. The Watson of the piece is colorless Stacey Bishop, relating the incidents in the first person. All are elements that became known as Van Dine's trade-marks.

But, unlike some marvelous parodies that are still fresh and funny today (*The Julius Caesar Murder Case* by Wallace Irwin; *Case for Three Detectives* by Leo Bruce; *Murder in Pastiche* by Marion Mainwaring), *Death in the Dark,* after forty-five years, has lost the lustre of satiric fun-and-games, and the probable original intention of acid parody has paled.

Still, while losing its imitative power, *Death in the Dark* has preserved a life of its own. The plot contains some intriguing situations. The first murder takes place in a pitch-dark room, yet the bullet finds its target–the middle of the forehead–with unerring certainty. The second murder occurs in the middle of a large room in broad daylight, with detectives all around. The third is in a prison cell, locked and guarded. The solutions are interesting, there is a sense of mounting suspense, the identity of the villain is satisfactory.

– Amnon Kabatchnik

The Curate Finds a Corpse by A. T. Rich. Bear Hudson, 1945. Wraps.

Although the author wrote a number of romantic novels, this was a solo mystery effort and a locked room affair at that.

While returning home from a visit to one of his parishioners, Rev. Peter is accosted by a strange-looking man who claims he wants the Reverend to help his dying

wife. The Reverend and the man board a bus to the wife's lodgings, but the man actually never gets on the bus. Rev. Peter returns home hurriedly, thinking he's been tricked by a burglar. When he gets home he finds a corpse in a locked room in a building next door to his house.

So begins one of the most amazing and brilliant locked room murder studies I've ever encountered.

Two pretty lady detectives help gather evidence for Inspector Randolph Lightfoot of the Yard, who is called in by the Curate. The plot thickens with suspects and the motive for the crime is elusive. Lightfoot draws up eight statements on eight possible suspects, and begins to work toward a solution by the process of elimination, using circumstances, conditions, and clues.

The story is interrupted by a meaningless burglary and by chases of suspects. Finally, using his unique methods of detection, Lightfoot comes up with the one and only possible solution. Edgar Allan Poe himself could not have invented a better way into that locked room so states the jacket of the book, and the story itself fully bears out that promise.

Hal Brodsky

Letters

From Jeff Banks:

Reader Harwood's suggestion of a Creasey fanzine is a good one. I'm ready to subscribe; I'll suggest someone do one on Erle Stanley Gardner, who (counting his pulp work) was even more prolific, and (for my money) even more interesting. There have already been individual fanzines devoted to Sax Rohmer, Edgar Wallace and a few others, but Creasey and Gardner seem to me broad enough subjects (and popular enough, too) to command larger readerships for longer periods of time!

I was glad to see the note from Art Scott, whose reviews and letters I've been enjoying in your competitor *The Mystery Nook*. I strongly suggest you solicit some material from him . . . an in-depth treatment of the Shell Scott books would be particularly welcome.

Reader Vining's idea for series reviews is an excellent one; his opening efforts are fine. Let's hope he'll send you some more and also that other writers will join in.

Many thanks to author Stephen Mertz for the Mike Avallone checklist. I'd guessed that "Troy Conway" was a penname, but had no idea that Mike (one of my favorites from the beginning of Ed Noon) sometimes hid behind it; nor was I aware of two of the feminine pennames he uses for Gothics. More reading I'll look forward to! By the way, I hope you caught Mike's letter in a recent *Mystery Nook* with a scathing comment on Ross MacDonald and his coterie of academic critics.

Harwood's "It'll Never Happen!" was amusing, and the sort of piece (like many you publish) that jogs the reader's mind. Here is part of what it suggested to me:

(1) Detective Harry Orwell is brought into yet another case in which Lester Hodges is one of the suspects. Sadly, he identifies Lester as the killer, after all. Then, the "Harry O" series having lost its most interesting character, it goes off the air.

(2) Mack Bolan, the Executioner, goes to another major city to continue his war on the Mafia, but finds that the Marksman has gotten there before him. He is arrested by the local police for vagrancy . . . end of short story.

(3) The girl, terrified and running in the foreground of the Gothic paperback's cover, apparently menaced by the crumbling and sinister looking mansion in the background, turns out to be a multiple murderess. (This one has actually happened more than once!)

Kabatchnik & Aucott provided me with several moments of interesting reading and reminded me of a question I've been wanting to put to your readers. Something I've wondered about ever since finally getting around to reading *The Three Coffins* by Carr, is can

someone footnote (or identify) all those references to detective fiction in the "Locked Room Lecture" chapter? I recognized a few, like the Poe one, of course, but more often than not I didn't. Help!

Finally, a bit of personal news. I expect, next Fall, to teach the first anywhere (so far as I know) college course in Mickey Spillane. This will be a one-semester hour credit for junior level students; I plan to use four or possibly five books. The only one I've inalterably selected thus far is *The Erection Set;* I plan to also include one early and one latter-day Mike Hammer, and I'm open to suggestions from your readers regarding what books I should include.

* * * * * * * *

From Barry Pike (London):

In the November TAD I much enjoyed Marvin Lachman's "American Regional Mystery" article, and only wish he were beginning his travels rather than approaching their end.

I expect by now someone has told R. W. Hays about Robert Player's second novel, *The Homicidal Colonel* Gollancz, 1970), and his fourth, *Let's Talk of Graves, of Worms and Epitaphs* (Gollancz, 1975); and confirmed that Kenneth More played Father Brown, and surprisingly well, too, in a recent ITV series.

Re Lloyd Rose on *Gaudy Night,* am I alone in thinking *Have His Carcase* the best of Sayers?—and am I also alone in not being much excited by the prospect of a second volume of *Tales of the Black Widowers*?

Frank Eck writes with the typical exclusivity (or is it exclusivism?) of the crime novel devotee maddened by the thought that some people actually like detective stories. Crime novels, of course, represent "an ongoing and developing form of fiction," whereas those other antediluvian relics are of no more value than "a trip down memory lane, through the wax works and to the land of Lud" (wherever that may be—it sounds suspiciously like the Land of Nod to me). Heavens, what condescension! It's a slight relief to see the word "balance" in Mr. Eck's next sentence, despite the lack of that quality in my quotations from his letter. I feel as indignant as Dorothy L. Sayers defending Sherlock Holmes scholarship from its detractors—some people can't bear to see others enjoying themselves in their own way (or words to that effect—see the preface to *Unpopular Opinions*).

* * * * * * * *

From Newt Baird:

This may be old hat to more discerning Agatha Christie *aficionados* than myself. Anyhow, there's a foreshadowing of the author's last great Hercule Poirot adventure, *Curtain,* in his 1935 adventure, *The A.B.C. Murders* [also known by other titles].

In chapter 3 [page 8, Pocket Book ed.], the following conversation between Poirot and Japp occurs:

> "I have already told Hastings that I am like the Prima Donna who makes always one more appearance," said Poirot, smiling.
>
> "Shouldn't wonder if you ended by detecting your own death," said Japp, laughing heartily. "That's an idea, that is. Ought to be put in a book."
>
> "It will be Hastings who will have to do that," said Poirot, twinkling at me.

As you know, this is exactly what Hastings does in *Curtain.* If the latter book was indeed written in the 1940's, as publicity for it tells us, then the late, great detective fiction master would appear to have had its plot in mind as early as 1935. But, as I say, this may be well known already. I hadn't spotted it before I recommended "A.B.C." to another reader recently, and he asked me about it—so he, Robert Greenwood, should be given credit.

It is unfortunate that *The A.B.C. Murders* had its reputation besmirched by the ghastly Tony Randall film (*Alphabet Murders*). It had nothing whatever to do with the excellent plot of the book. But, no doubt, readers who connect the two have been put off from reading the fine story by the idiocy of the "spy-spoof" the film made of it. Anita Ekberg, no less. Gad! Will the "spoofers" please dry up?

* * * * * * * *

From Art Scott (1089 Tanland Dr., No. 103, Palo Alto, California 94303):

I'm looking for collaborators for the project to identify all mystery paperback cover artwork done by Robert (Bob) McGinnis. Anybody willing to help will be sent a copy of the McGinnis piece/checklist which is part of the most recent issue of my quarterly, *Shot Scott's Rap Sheet.*

A couple of notes of general interest . . . The February 13 issue of the *San Francisco Bay Guardian,* a tabloid weekly, has as cover feature "The Sleuths of San Francisco," an article on S.F. hardboilers Gores, Pronzini and Collin Wilcox. It includes photos of the writers and an amusing "crime map" showing S.F. locales from the books of those three authors . . . The May issue of *Detective Comics* (No. 459) has an amusing whodunit by Martin Pasko. Mystery writer "Elliot Quinn" is killed on the eve of publication of his new book. He manages to leave a "dying message" clue and Batman, assisted by "Lt. Dannay" of the cops, manages to ferret out the killer.

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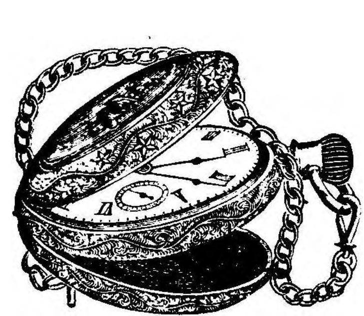


NEW GASLIGHT Continued from page 177

rabbi's; and that it was on the basis of this high dignity that he won the friendship of his unwitting victims. I have never understood that Orthodox rabbis were on such easy social terms with English and Irish girls, and perhaps many of us have chosen the wrong field.

I have reported so many theories that perhaps I may be permitted to add one of my own. It appears to me that a very likely suspect emerges from an eye-witness description of the Ripper at one of the inquests cited by Dr. Stowell in his article in *The Criminologist.* In that testimony a man who was in the company of one of the victims shortly before the murder is described as being about 30 years of age, 5 feet, 9 inches tall, and wearing a deer stalker cap with a peak in front and behind. It is my own theory that Jack the Ripper may have been none other than the distinguished Victorian detective Sherlock Holmes himself.

The Jack the Ripper case has left an interesting legacy in literature and music. The first important literary reflection of the Jack the Ripper murders was in the Lulu plays of Frank Wedekind. Wedekind was in London shortly after the murders when the crimes were still on everybody's lips. In the conclusion of the second Lulu play, Lulu, a female earth spirit, is murdered by her nemesis and male counterpart, Jack the Ripper. The English seem to be uncomfortable with the idea of a sexual murder. It is perhaps for that reason that they have produced so many theories trying to attribute more rational motives to Jack, such as revenge for infection. About as far as they are usually willing to go in the direction of acknowledging abnormality is to accuse a butcher of an occupational aberration. However, the idea of lust-murder or *Lustmord* is unfortunately only too comprehensible for the Germans, and Wedekind has perhaps given us the most accurate portrayal of the Ripper, as a man of sexual violence heightened by repression.

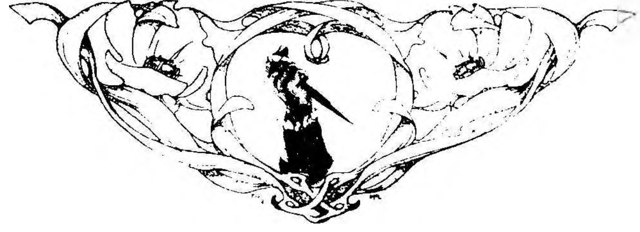
A more demure Jack the Ripper appears in the Edwardian novel of Marie Belloc Lowndes, *The Lodger.* Her murderer is named Mr. Sleuth. Perhaps in giving him this name she shared my suspicion of Sherlock Holmes. In any event, Mr. Sleuth is a single gentleman lodger such as Queen Victoria had in mind. He is a Bible-reading vegetarian teetotaler who pins to his victims' clothing his signature as "The Avenger." The sins he is avenging have been upgraded or downgraded (depending on your point of view) from prostitution to alcoholism. *The Lodger* has been made into a series of motion pictures including the early classic by Alfred Hitchcock. In 1960, it was set as an opera by the English composer Phyilis Tate.

The French have taken a lighter approach to the case. In 1937 director Marcel Carné spoofed the Ripper crimes in a film entitled *Drole de Drame.* This film made fun of the incompetence of Scotland Yard and also turned the butcher theory on its head. Jean Louis Barrault played a Limehouse killer who specialized in the slaughter of butchers. Like the Lodger, Barrault's killer was a vegetarian. However, he avenged sins not against abstention but against his animal friends.

One of the most recent satires of Jack the Ripper is the musical comedy of that name which opened at the Ambassador Theatre in London last Fall. All of the principal suspects are introduced, but the main character is Montague Druitt who, as I have mentioned, is changed from a lawyer into an Evangelist, much to my approval. The actor portraying Druitt bears a strong resemblance to Peter Sellers, so I suppose we must also add Mr. Sellers to our list of suspects. Mary Kelly is a beautiful actress, and you will be glad to know that her life is spared at the end of the musical comedy.

One of the finest short stories based on the Ripper murders is Thomas Burke's "The Hands of Mr. Ottermole." This story produces yet another professional suspect, namely the policeman responsible for the East End beat where the murders were committed, a policeman to whom Burke gives a double animal name, "Ottermole." Burke's solution explains at the same time why the Ripper was so successful in escaping attention and also why the local pilice never seemed quite to arrive on time. The story also serves as a useful warning to journalists intent on discovering the truth of the crimes, for the story ends with a reporter triumphantly confronting Sergeant Ottermole as the Ripper only to be murdered for his candor. The reporter springs on the Sergeant the question: "Now, as man to man, tell me, Sergeant Ottermole, just *why* did you kill all those inoffensive people?" I will let Burke's conclusion serve as mine:

> The Sergeant stopped, and the journalist stopped. There was just enough light from the sky, which held the reflected light of the continent of London, to give him a sight of the sergeant's face, and the sergeant's face was turned to him with a wide smile of such urbanity and charm that the journalist's eyes were frozen as they met it. The smile stayed for some seconds. Then said the sergeant: 'Well, to tell you the truth, Mr. Newspaper Man, I don't know. I really don't know. In fact, I've been worried about it myself. But I've got an idea just like you. Everybody knows that we can't control the workings of our minds. Don't they? Ideas come into our minds without asking. But everybody's supposed to be able to control his body. Why? Eh? We get our minds from lord-knows-where-from people who were dead hundreds of years before we were born. Mayn't we get our bodies in the same way? Our faces—our legs—our heads—they aren't completely ours. We don't make 'em. They come to us. And couldn't ideas come into our bodies like ideas come into our minds? Eh? Can't ideas live in nerve and muscle as well as in brain? Couldn't it be that parts of our bodies aren't really us, and couldn't ideas come into those parts all of a sudden, like ideas come into—into'—he shot his arms out, showing the great white-gloved hands and hairy wrists; shot them out so swiftly to the journalist's throat that his eyes never saw them—'into *my hands*!'



Continued from page 188
instances, we have a sporting chance only if we have specialized knowledge about matters which were more generally known then.

Sometimes it is, indeed, only a matter of the essential being somewhat less generally known. The reason why the culprit is able to get away with a flagrant imposture in "The Vampire of the Village" is that, even at the time, most members of the Church of England not only did not know much about Roman Catholicism (which Fr. Brown would hardly expect them to) but they did not know much about the C. of E. either. That was circa 1935. But a present-day reader who knew something of the great Anglican controversies (and a Roman Catholic priest in England at that time had studied them) could solve the mystery. However, only a few of the stories really turn upon such specialized data.

So far as I am aware, there is no Father Brown Society, nor ever has been; and I can see no reason why there ever should be. The whole point about the mock earnest scholarship of the Baker Street Irregulars springs from the fact that John Watson, M.D., was not a careful writer and frequently contradicted himself or made curious statements which could not be true under the circumstances. In addition to the unintentional slips, Dr. Watson was a Victorian gentleman who took care to conceal various matters which he considered improper to reveal, so that he frequently misleads us with full intent. (That is something which begins to show itself once you try to straighten out the unintentional errors.) Beneath the surface candor, there is a very slippery vagueness, and Watson shows himself to be quite a mysterious character indeed.

Early in the century, one Father Ronald Know (who wrote six detective novels, and later translated the Bible), in a moment of irritation at what he considered to be sheer nonsense in some of the Bible criticism and analysis he had read, remarked that the methods of the "higher" Bible criticism could be applied as usefully and meaningfully to the Sherlock Holmes stories. Then, possibly fascinated by his own sudden insight, he wrote a couple of articles doing just that—and the results were fascinating to not only himself, but to numerous other persons who had read the Sherlock Holmes tales. Thus it all started. . . .

But the Father Brown series do not present the opportunities for rewarding effort in these directions. Not that a few slips might not be found—but Chesterton was a much more careful writer than A. Conan Doyle, who at one time admitted he wasn't particularly careful. The pastiches of Holmes by August Derleth (the Solar Pons stories) offer slender grounds for such digging, too. In fact, the only series of detective stories that I have read which might possibly offer some rewards for Irregular Inquiry, would be the Nero Wolfe series. Mr. Archie Goodwin is a most slippery fellow, and Wolfe himself. . . .

But that is another article.

Continued from page 200
The whole tone of a book can be set by one description, as in *Murder Being Once Done*, where Wexford feels the "oppressive chill of death" in Kenbourne Vale Cemetery:

> The absurd was overpowered by the sinister, by the figures in bronze and sculpted stone, which, made furtive and hideous by encroaching moss and decades of fallen grime, lurked among the trailing tendrils and even, as the wind rustled between leathery leaves and broken masonry, seemed to move. (pp. 17-18)

The prevailing gloom of Kenbourne Vale continues throughout the book in the way Rendell treats the "Children of Revelation," the living conditions of the tenants of Garmisch Terrace and their attitudes.

Rendell uses secondary characters as skillfully as she constructs plot and narrative, and many of her minor characters are remembered long after the book is finished. Women, especially, take on a new dimension in mystery fiction as Rendell explores their various roles in modern society, using them first for similarities, then differences in a never-ending counterpoint of personalities. The comparisons and contrasts are many and they appear in all of her books. Her writing is laced with little touches of human frailty and beauty, individual idiosyncracies and psychological climes.

To attempt to decide whether Ruth Rendell is a major talent can be done on the strength of what she has published to date. Her baker's dozen contains everything from the mediocre (*In Sickness and In Health*), the competent (*A New Lease of Death*), the flawed (*From Doon With Death*), to the brilliant (*Murder Being Once Done* and *Some Lie and Some Die*). She achieved a level of writing excellence in *Wolf to the Slaughter* which she has used and exploited ever since. A new book from her pen appears more or less regularly every year, and enthusiasts can only hope this continues.

IN MEMORY OF R. W. HAYS

With much sadness I report the death on February 13 of a great friend of detective fiction and *The Armchair Detective*, Dr. Rhys W. Hays, 49, who was associate professor of history at the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point.

Professor Hays had his doctorate from Columbia University, and specialized in church and medieval history at Stevens Point. He authored one book (*History of the Abbey of Aberconway, 1186-1537*, 1963) as well as numerous articles for professional journals. He also frequently appeared in the pages of TAD, and I understand that it is hoped to collect his writings on detective fiction for book publication.

Professor Hays attended last year's Bouchercon in Chicago, and I had an opportunity—all too brief—to meet him personally and to share with him our common interests face to face. It was a warm and enjoyable encounter, and so I also feel I've lost a personal friend.

– AJH

From Calvin L. Branche:

I teach a course in Mystery/Detective Fiction on the High School level. I am very interested in hearing from teachers, students, mystery/detective addicts, and the like, regarding the "teaching" of the genre. Suggestions for books, films, literary points of view, criticism, philosophy, etc. would be greatly appreciated. I recently gave a workshop on teaching in our area at the Mass. Council Teachers of English Annual Conference and found that interest in the genre is growing considerably, and I thought that if I asked TAD readers to answer the question "What would I teach if I were running such a course?", the responses would be quite varied and informative. Please send your answers to 39 Bancroft Road, Holden, Mass. 01520.

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From Jon Breen:

Just a quick note to wish you best of luck as TAD moves into a new phase. The journal has been so excellent, as well as so admirably regular in its appearance, up to now that many readers are bound to view any change with alarm, but I know you believe this move can make TAD better still, and I am crossing my fingers that you are right.

The February issue was a dandy. I thought David Brownell's article captured the appeal of the Lathen-Dominic novels remarkably well in a short article. But Mr. Brownell will be interested to know that the *first* Dominic book was called *Murder, Sunny Side Up,* published by Abelard-Schuman in 1968. The collaborators seem to have had a harder time placing their Ben Safford novels than they do the Thatchers, although the two series are of similarly high quality. Abelard-Schuman is hardly a major publisher of mysteries, and the next two Dominic novels, per your bibliography, were published first in England. It's almost as if the political background scared the American publishers off.

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From Ruth R. Missal:

The Supplementary List to the Haycraft/Queen Definitive Library hits home with me. For many years I have been, and continue to be, on the track of the books listed by H/Q. I love the old fields you are opening for us. May I tentatively nominate three more to the Supplement: *To Catch a Thief* by David Dodge; *Gilbert's Last Toothache* by Margaret Scherf; and *The Man Who Never Was* by Ewen Montagu. These nominations are entirely subjective: I simply never quit rereading them.

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From George Wuyek:

I know the burden you must be carrying publishing TAD and hope that the assumption of "non-editorial operations" by [Publisher's Inc] will lighten your load BUT I am pessimistic—a similar takeover—*The Baker Street Journal* by the University of Fordham—resulted in a doubling of subscription rates without any material improvement in the final product. I guess both publications are paying the price of being *too* successful.

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From Rachel P. Young:

Could someone do an article like the Albert Campion series for Daly's Gamadge?

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From J. M. Purcell:

Reference is to my 11/75 review of Joe Gores' important *Hammett* and to Frank McSherry's followup comments in the letters column (2/76).

1. As the afterword says and as I know from correspondence with Mr. Gores, *Hammett* was written from a much fuller private knowledge of the California DH of the 1920's than is available to anyone (like myself) only using in-print sources. Lillian Hellman for instance was not in his life then. In strict terms of investigative evidence, Gores is safer in positing an unpoliticalized strikebreaking labor-spy DH than I am in my review—where I express the inferred belief that the DH of the time was in an intellectual ferment that went beyond simply revolutionizing the U.S. detective novel by his pulp serials. It's my inferences that need to be supported, not Gores'.

2. Simply as reviewing techniques, my list of "objections" (arguments about the implications of data) should probably have begun at the 2/3-wordage point, not the halfway mark, of my review. The reader was supposed to presume from the review's length that *Hammett* was being treated as an important modern American novel, cast in the thriller's technical form.

In this form, I object to certain general modern trends which seem to me to derive from the WW-II *film noir* rather than from Hammett or Buchan. But one can, in criticizing *Maltese Falcon* or *Roger Ackroyd,* discuss their endings. I had to imply heavy-handedly that the reader should buy and read *Hammett*; and then take the trouble of checking his experience of the book against the final conclusion of my review.

3. Perhaps a few TAD readers don't yet know the happy news that Francis Coppola will be filming *Hammett* from Gores' commissioned screenplay. *Hammett* seems to me a more sophisticated project than *Godfathers I-II,* both morally and intellectually. My hope is that the book complexities that made my review so long will find their way into the script and film.

Continued from page 208

a missing manuscript, a minor college, and an anti-establishment student group all play their part in a mystery novel that is very much with it—especially in the sense of sheer entertainment.

Late word reaches us that Spencer's second investigation, *God Save the Child* (1974), has appeared under the aegis of the same publisher. In this case the still unreconstructed Spencer is asked by an extremely obnoxious contractor to find his runaway teenage son. This novel contains all the entertainment values of its predecessor, and is even better.

REX STOUT

Many critics have lavished praise on the early novelettes that featured the elephantine investigator Nero Wolfe and his incorrigible assistant Archie Goodwin. *Black Orchids* (1942) (Pyramid) represents this late author's first two experiments in that new direction, and the results are highly gratifying. Plot, puzzle, detection, and the exhilarating Wolfe-Goodwin byplay represent Stout at the height of his powers.

Continued from page 209

S 15 GRUPPE, HENRY

The Truxton Cipher
S&S 1973

A minor triumph in that the author, a retired naval officer, has produced an imaginative variant of the too-well-worn espionage theme. Here the passing of secrets to the enemy has already occurred, and in a good cause. The problem is to find a suitable fall guy who shall lose a ship in a plausible way, so as to serve someone else's ulterior purpose. A complex plot, well handled; marine and naval detail effectively done. There is even a *femme fatale* who is convincing and whose role is much more than decorative.

S 16 HEXT, HARRINGTON
(pseud. of Eden Phillpotts)

The Monster
Macm 1925

A West country idyll, told in the novelist's best manner, is broken up by the murder of the girl's father by the boy's —or so it seems on good evidence. But the motive is not clear and the man has vanished. Village life and characters are studied in slow tempo, yet with mounting interest as the able private detective also disappears, and the boy soon after. It is by now clear that only a monster, that is, an unsuspected neighbor living a Jekyll and Hyde existence, can be responsible for so much homicidal success. And so it proves, with the idyll fully repaired. Phillpotts must be credited with the gift of not repeating his plots or effects, while at the same time using to advantage his familiar rural scenes and faces. (1131)

S 17 JENKINS, ELIZABETH

Educ. at Cambridge, became a teacher, then a rescue worker during the London Blitz, and has for some fifteen years devoted herself to writing novels and biography, including the much admired *Elizabeth the Great*.

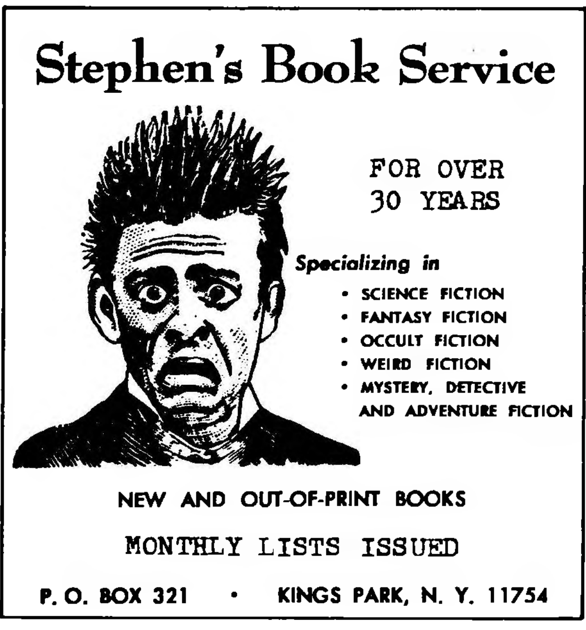
Dr. Gully's Story
CM 1972

Like a number of other novelists of our day, Miss Jenkins has adopted for this fictional account of the Bravo Case (or Balham Mystery) of 1876 the kind of treatment that sounds like history rather than romance. Yet it is in large part a romance that she tells, from the point of view of the most interesting person in the case, Mrs. Bravo's former lover. The scientific, medical, and psychological substance of the book is new and authentic, as are also the tone and setting of an affair in which Miss J. spots the right culprit. (A scarce item in the U.S., though it may still be available through Publishers Central Bureau, Avenel, N.J.)

S 18 PULLEIN-THOMPSON, JOSEPHINE

Gin and Murder
Hamm 1959

Dedicated "To Joanna Cannan" (the author's mother), this pleasant novel of murder in sporting surroundings introduces Detective Chief Inspector Flecker and Sergeant Browning. Flecker is casual, imaginative, and tends to leave his belongings about, but he is in many ways an improvement on Joanna Cannan's intentionally over-genteel Inspector Price. Here are engaging characters, a good discovery of how the poison got into the victim, and a taut ending.



Letters

From Frank D. McSherry, Jr.:

Once again it's crowded at the top, in TAD 9/2, with first place going to B. A. Pike's fine article on the character and career of Albert Campion, which continues the easy readibility and smooth construction of the first installment. Second place goes to the intriguing additions suggested by Messieurs Aucott and Kabatchnik to the Haycraft/Queen Definitive Library; and I would have rated it first if they'd told us a little more about the various novels' themes, style and points of special interest. Third place is a tie between pieces that are short in length but long on insight and depth—Harris on Orwell's misjudgment about the crime shocker, *No Orchids for Miss Blandish*; and David Brownell's study of character in the novels of Emma Lathen/R. B. Dominic.

I like the interest shown in American morality as revealed and exemplified in the mystery that has appeared in TAD recently, especially because the tone isn't preachy or prissily hypocritical; not out to sell anything. I also applaud the useful Hoch checklist, the new continuing (I hope) department of "Supplements to Catalogue of Crime," and Banks on the new Avenger. Banks doesn't stress one feature of the old Avenger series by Paul Ernest that made the Avenger unique among pulp heroes: He would always warn the villains at the end that their attempt to kill him would backfire and destroy themselves. Banks mentions the use by Goulart in his new series of Avenger novels of sf fan Forest J. Ackerman as a character; Ackerman also appears under his real name, helping the Man from UNCLE investigate the death of an Uncle agent, found shot to death in the snow, with no footprints save his own running around him—and, oddly, two small punctures in the base of the throat . . . in the eerie foothills of Transylvania. *The Vampire Affair* (Ace, 1966) by David McDaniel, also has a brief guest appearance by another famous character, rather consideably older and far more sinister . . . .

Other famous detective-crime characters appear, in a somewhat different way, in a new sub-genre of literature originated by Philip Jose Farmer. Farmer stated (in *Science Fiction Review*, No. 14) it was the result of "partial writer's block . . . I found I couldn't write anything under my own name, so . . . I launched my fictional-author series . . . a string of short stories, and some novels, *by* a fictional author, that is, by a character in fiction who is also a writer. Example: Kilgore Trout. Or David Copperfield . . . or Martin Eden . . . These are not . . . pastiches; they are to be written as if by the character himself. Thus the story by David Copperfield is not written in Dickens' style: [Gene] Wolfe did it in what he conceived to be Copperfield's style."

Rex Stout fans will be interested in one of these Farmer tales especially, a fantasy about a poltergeist seeking revenge for his cruel murder, "The Volcano," a short story in *Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*, February 1976, as by Paul Chapin—the crippled, venomous, angry author in Stout's *The League of Frightened Men*. Another, as by E. W. Hornung's Harry "Bunny" Manders, side-kick of that Edwardian Robin Hood, Raffles, is a novelette and tour-de-force entitled "The Problem of the Sere Bridge—Among Others." This story combines without any strain Holmes, Watson, Raffles, and the three most famous unsolved cases of the Master: the vanishing of the cutter Alicia, that sailed into a patch of mist one clear afternoon and was never seen again; the case of Isadora Persane, the well-known journalist and duellist found on his knees stark staring mad before a matchbox containing a type of worm unknown to science; and the strange case of Mr. James Phillimore, who stepped back into his house for an umbrella and was never seen again in this world. Science-fiction, but of interest to mystery fans. A novel in this sub-genre, as by "Kilgore Trout," a fictional author of Kurt Vonnegut's creation, *The Son of Jimmy Valentine*, will not now be written, Mr. Farmer states. . . .

My thanks to Reader Scott for the tip on the appearance of the black-and-white comic version of Sherlock Holmes; there is another Holmes-inspired comic in *The Joker* (The Clown Prince of Crime) No. 6 Apr. '76, in which actor Clive Sigerson, playing the role of the world's greatest detective, is injured in a robbery perpetrated by the Joker; believing himself to be Holmes he pursues the villain in a series of cases and clues with tie-ins to Holmes stories, including crimes committed on the Red Circle golf course and in a respectable theater, the Bohemia—"scandalous!" Not great but an amusing take-off. . . .

Reader Lellenberg will find another Lord Darcy story, billed as a "short novel" but actually a novelette, in *Fantastic*, "The Sixteen Keys," by Randall Garrett, for May '76. Basically a puzzle story; again though magic is involved the solution depends on reasoning.

So far there are no tragic deaths of great authors this time around, but two new magazines have passed away—*The Executioner* and the *87th Precinct*; however, a new one will be out at about this time of writing, entitled simply *Mystery Monthly* (119 West 57th Street).

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From Dorothy Glantz (Sweden):

As usual I started with the Letters (in TAD 9/2) and starting from the top, yes, I would very much like to see a Series Synopsis in TAD. Already I know that I shall not read the Executioner. It's junk, so a series synopsis is welcome. You see, I got burned on a Nick Carter once—by page 4 she already had her clothes off and I couldn't see what that had to do with the (eventual) plot—so I just didn't bother reading further. But I notice that more and more discussion space is being

given to series so obviously I must learn. And I notice that many of TAD readers were justifiably wary about *Farewell, My Lovely.* Well, having just seen Bogart in *The Big Sleep* the week previous, I was thoroughly unprepared for the blasphemy that was presented to me as Philip Marlowe. Terrible, terrible, terrible. O'Halloran and Ireland saved the show, especially O'Halloran.

There's Bogart film festival in Stockholm now so that has led me to re-read some Chandler which leads me to re-read Hammett and oh, my goodness, what a pleasure it is to read some good writing once again. Have just read Hammett's *Nightmare Town.* Believe me, it's been a long time since I read something like ". . . dark eyes flashed annoyance at the rear of the passing machine, and she essayed the street again." There are not too many dark eyed lassies "essay-ing" a street nowadays and the passing machine referred to was a Ford. Or how about this: "Strolling thus, a dark doorway suddenly vomited men upon them." There's a lot of vomiting going on nowadays, but "strolling thus . . . .?" And right at the beginning of *Nightmare Town* I had to bring out the dictionary because I did not know what "ferrule" was and if I hadn't looked it up, the coming fight wouldn't had been as exciting and "flivver"—how many TADians have actually *used* the word "flivver"?

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From Michael Avallone:

Immediate thanks, as Hans Stefan Santesson used to say, for the space and the neat job on the Avallone Checklist in TAD 9/2. With so much room to swing, I was amazed to find only two errors: *The Darkening Shadows* by Priscilla Dalton, is, of course, *The Darkening Willows* and the Karloff endorsed collection, *Tales of the Frightened* is *not* 'by a Boris Karloff Radio Show' but *'for'.* Anyone who has a copy will readily see that I am credited with the writing of the 26 stories though Pyramid's last edition proclaims '*text by*'—another editorial dodge to make the customer think Old Boris wrote the stuff. *Sic transit gloria mundi* . . . . bless Steve Mertz for his courage in tackling the job and declaring his stand. I'm going to spare him a short story and article and poem and essay list . . . TAD would need a thousand lines of type. There are actually 61 Noon short stories, as well as a couple of hundred mystery, western, baseball, science fiction and general subject matter yarns, in addition to some three hundred articles and countless poems, essays and addenda. I stopped counting the letters years ago.

It was great to see Ed Hoch come into his own at last. Ed's a journeyman and has been at it so long, readers tend to forget he achieved veteran status a decade ago. As well as an Edgar for "The Locked Room," which ran in Hans' gone-but-not-forgotten *Saint Magazine.* In 1956, when I was editing three mags for Republic Features and Ed submitted one of his Father Noone stories along with a Simon Ark special, I kidded him about both of us using a twelve o'clock character. And then "Edwina Noone" became a real byline and Ed Noon is still around and so is Ed Hoch, filling the pages of EQMM and AHMM with startling regularity.

He's one of my favorite colleagues.

And now, it's twenty years later and we meet again on the pages of TAD.

But what a wealth of work and words have gone under the keys since then—it's things like that that make you stop and wonder.

Etta C. Abraham's Son-and-Holy Ghosting on Chandler and Macdonald (Hammett is the Father, of course) is exceptional reportage. But again, if she thinks they are the only two writers who work the Eye Saga this way she's really read very little of the field the last thirty years. Else she will take the nearest Cop-Out exit every other academician does; the rest of us just don't matter because Chandler and Ross Mack are so brilliant . . . that's fair of her, I suppose, but I could supply her with a library of lines and paragraphs from the works of three other authors in the *genre* that just might flatten her premise even further. As well as a small army of men who worked the pulps way back then. What price Scholarship?

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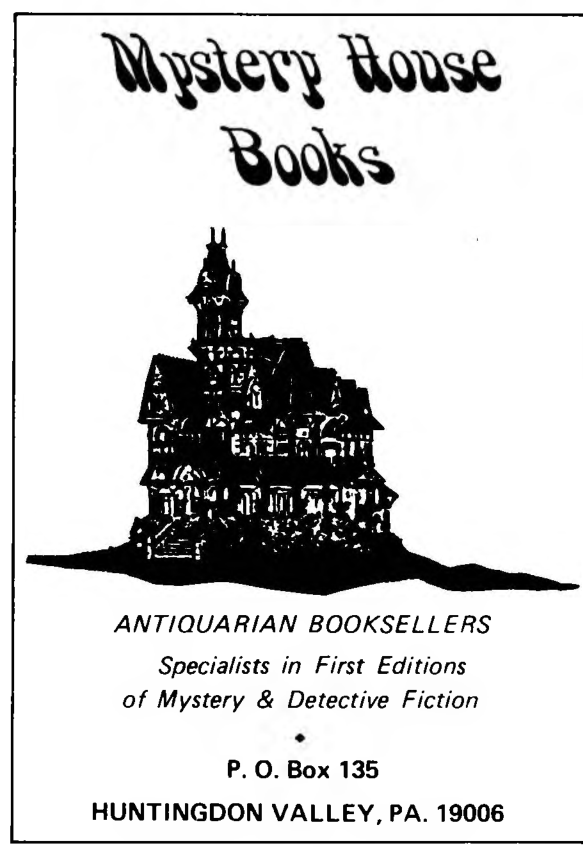

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HARDCOVERS

1. Allingham, Margery--The Gryth Chalice Mystery. 1st Am. Ed., 1931, VG-F in DJ--$12.00. Allingham, Mystery Mile, 1st Am. Ed., 1930, F in DJ-$12.00; Allingham, Pearls Before Swine, 1st Am. Ed.,1945, VG-F in DJ-$8.00
2. Anonymous, The Smiling Corpse, 1st Ed., 1935. (Rare parody in which Chesterton, Van Dine, Rhomer, Hammet, and others appear as characters) G-VG-$13.50
3. Bailey, H.C., The Queen of Spades, 1st Am. Ed., 1944, VG in chipped DJ-$6.50; Bailey, Meet Mr. Fortune, Reggie Fortune Omnibus, 14 stories, Book League, 1942, VG in DJ-$4.00
4. Carr, John Dickson, Dr. Fell, Detective, 1st Ed., Mercury Mystery #110 1947, wraps, VG-$10.00; Carr-Patrick Butler for the Defense, 1st Ed. preceding English ed. by 2 months, 1956, F in DJ-$8.50.
5. Chandler, Raymond, The Lady in the Lake, 1st Ed., 1943, Book Plate, Fine in DJ--$35.00
6. Christie, Agatha, The Hound of Death and Other Stories, 1st Ed., London, Odhams, 1933, G-VG (Spine lettering somewhat faded)-$22.00; Christie--The Mysterious Mr. Quinn, 1st Am. Ed., 1930, F in DJ-$16.00
7. Doyle, Arthur Conan, His Last Bow, 1st Am. Ed?, Doran, 1917, Orange binding--Only fair--$10.00
8. Eberhart, Mignon G., House of Storm, 1st Ed., 1949, inscribed by the authoress,, F in chipped DJ--$20.00
9. Farmer, Philip Jose, The Peerless Peer (Holmes meets Tarzan), Aspen Press lmtd. Ed, Mint in DJ-$11.00
10. Morrison, Arthur, The Green Diamond, 1st Am. Ed., 1904, VG-$15.00
11. Queen, Ellery (Ed.) Challenge to the Reader (Queen has changed the names of famous detectives and challenges you to gure out who they are) Blue Ribbon Books Ed., VG-F--$6.00
12. Queen, Ellery (Ed.) Mystery League Magazine, Volume 1 #1, 1st issue of this extremely rare pulp magazine of which there were only 4 issues. This one is in fine shape--$50.00
13. Sayers, Dorothy, Gaudy Night, 1st Ed., Gollancz, London, 1935, Fair to Good shape--$17.50

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1950: 1-4-11. 1951: 2-3-4-6-8-10. 1952: 1-7. 1953: 2-3-5-7-8-9-10-12. 1954: 1-2-3-5-8-11-12. 1955: All issues.--$2.50 each.
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OLD "MYSTERY" ILLUSTRATIONS WANTED: Engravings, line-drawings, and other artwork from out-of-print journals or books, for use in *The Armchair Detective.* Material should be in public domain, and (hopefully) free. Please write Assistant Managing Editor, TAD, 243 Twelfth St., Drawer P, Del Mar, CA 92014.

COMING SOON: Watch for announcement of *The Mystery Library,* to be published under the auspices of University of California (San Diego) Extension by Publisher's Inc., Del Mar, CA. See Tad's September 1976 issue for full details and invitation to become a charter member.

MYSTERY WRITERS (ACTIVE OR ASPIRING): Gain valuable insights and inspiration by attending the La Jolla Summer Writers' Conference, August 11-15, 1976, at the University of California, San Diego. Further information: University Extension, Q-014, University of California, La Jolla, CA 92093.

WANT TO PLEASE Uncle Morton or Aunt Minna, both lovers of mystery? Give them *The Armchair Detective* for birthday, Christmas, anniversary or Halloween gifts.

LOST: One deerstalker hat. Somewhere near Great Peter Street postoffice. Hatband imprinted with initials S.H. Kindly inform Dr. John H. Watson at No. 221 B, Baker Street, London.

Dorothy Glantz (Holavedsvagen 9, bv., S-181 64 Lidingo, Sweden) wants Vol. 5 No. 1 and Vol. 6 No. 1 of TAD.

Jon Breen (10642 La Bahia Ave., Fountain Valley, CA 92708) has the following EQMM's for sale or trade: August 1947, March 1954, February 1953, April 1953, July 1953, October 1952. Also, the third issue (Aug-Sept 1953) of *The Saint Detective Magazine* and the 1946 paperback mystery-science fiction anthology, *The Saint's Choice of Impossible Crime.*

Allan Kleinberg (501 Cranford Road, Cherry Hill, N.J. 08003) has a free list of mystery paperbacks/hard-covers. In addition, he is looking for Berkeley's *Murder in the Basement* and *The Amateur Crime (Mr. Priestley's Problem)*, Blake's *The Deadly Joker,* Towne's *Death Out of Thin Air,* and the Detection Club's *Ask a Policeman, The Floating Admiral* and *Double Death.*

E. S. Lauterbach (700 N. Chauncey, W. Lafayette, Inc. 47906) wants EQMM, May and July, 1961.

Fred Dueren (5324 Ville Angela, Hazelwood, Mo. 63042) is looking for Taylor's *The Tinkling Symbol*; David Frome's *In at the Death* and *Murder of an Old Man*; Brett Halliday's *Dividend on Death* and *Mike Shayne Investigates*; Lockridge's *Spin Your Web, Lady*; Kelly Roos' *If the Shroud Fits, The Frightened Stiff, Grave Danger*; Charteris' *Meet the Tiger*; and Coxe's *Mrs. Murdock Takes a Case.*

Edwin L. Murray (2540 Chapel Hill Road, Durham, N. Car. 27707) needs Fredric Brown's *The Office, The Shaggy Dog and other murders, The Far Cry* (Bantam 1133); Stark's *The Rare Coin Score, The Blackbird, The Outfit* (Pocket Book); Tucker's *This Witch, Last Stop, The Hired Target* (Ace D-241), *The Stalking Man, Red Herring,* and *The Dove*; H. Beam Piper's *Murder in the Gunroom.*

Claude Held has free lists of hardcover mystery fiction. Address: Box 140, Buffalo, N. Y. 14225.

Howard Sharpe (P. O. Box 204, St. Kilda, Vic., Australia 3182) would appreciate help in getting all TADs before Vol. 8/4; EQMM 11/45, 2/49, 11/49, 1/51, 2/52, 11/52, 1/55, 3/55, 6/55, 1/56, 3/56, 5/56, 7/56, 3/64; all issues of *The Saint Magazine,* and paperbacks featuring Raffles by Barry Perowne.

Mrs. Mary Haney (2242 Cedar, Forest Grove, Ore. 97116) would like to buy issues of TAD before Vol. 8 No. 3.

J & J O'Donoghue Books (1927 2nd Ave. S., Anoka, Minn. 55303) regularly issues lists of mystery fiction for sale.

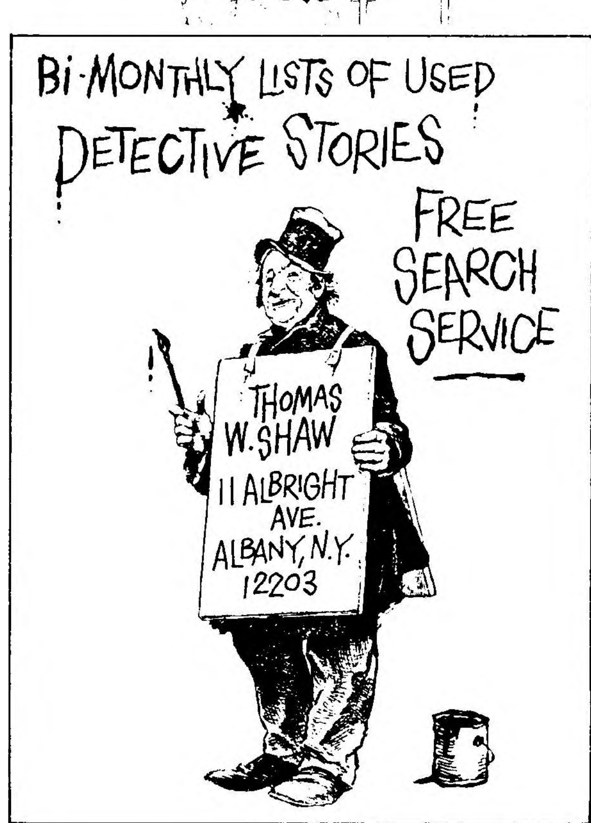
James G. Cassidy (13117 Yorktown Dr., Bowie, Md. 20715) wishes to buy, at any reasonable cost, Volumes 1-7 of TAD (photocopies acceptable).

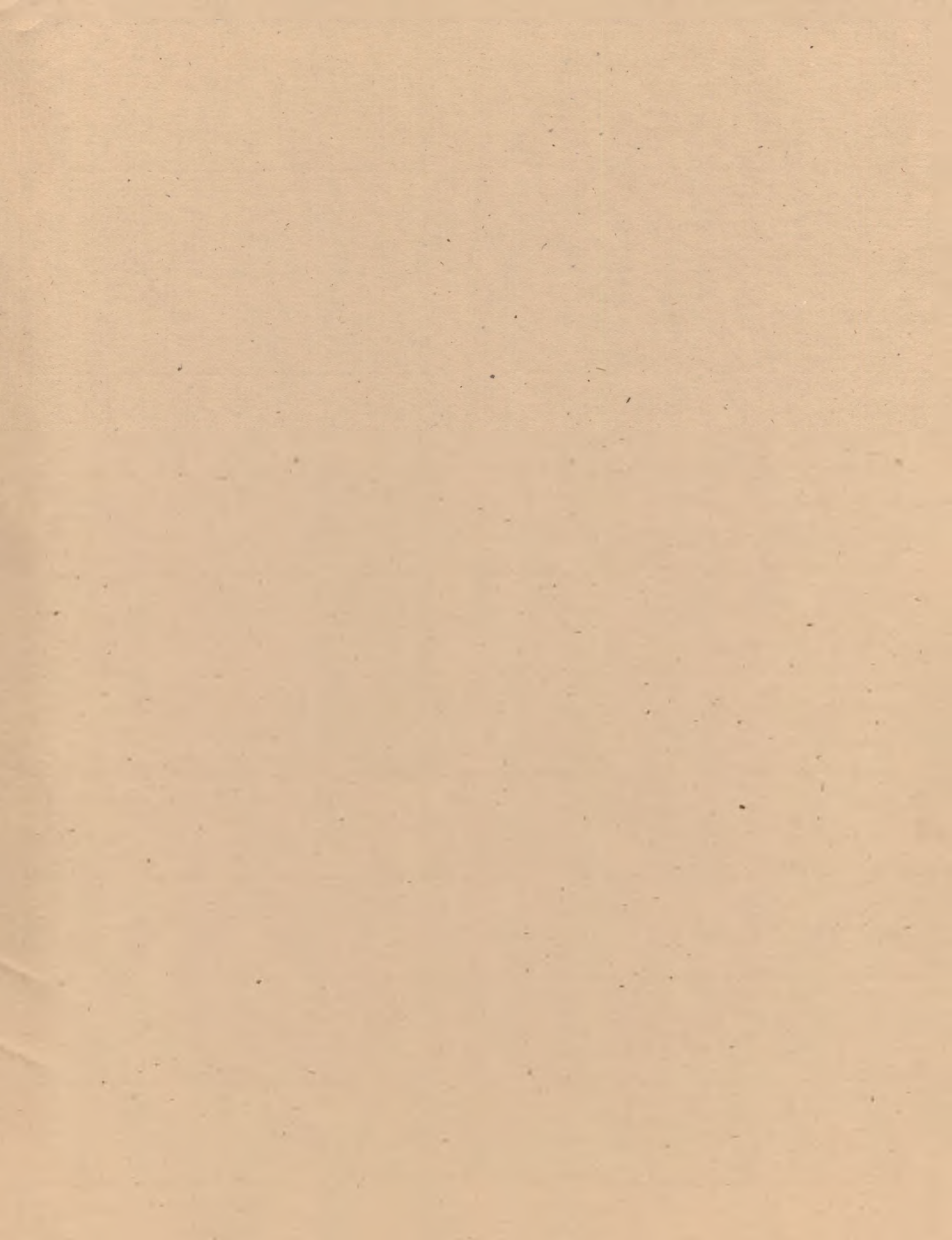
Steve Smallman (16600 S.E. 17th St., Bellevue, Wa. 98008) wants pulp reprint paperbacks and early issues of TAD. Also he has lists of paperbacks for sale; if interested, send stamp.

Claude Held (Box 140, Buffalo, N. Y. 14225) regularly issues free lists of mystery fiction which he has for sale.

Jack Irwin (16 Gloucester Lane, Trenton, N. J. 08618) has AHMM, EQMM, *Manhunt, Mike Shayne, Mystery Book, Saint, Black Mask, Detective Fiction Weekly, Dime Detective,* etc., magazines for sale. SASE appreciated.

Bruce R. Beaman (1417 Main Street, Stevens Point, Wis. 54481) has for sale a complete set (missing only Winter, 1942) of EQMM. Offers are welcome.





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