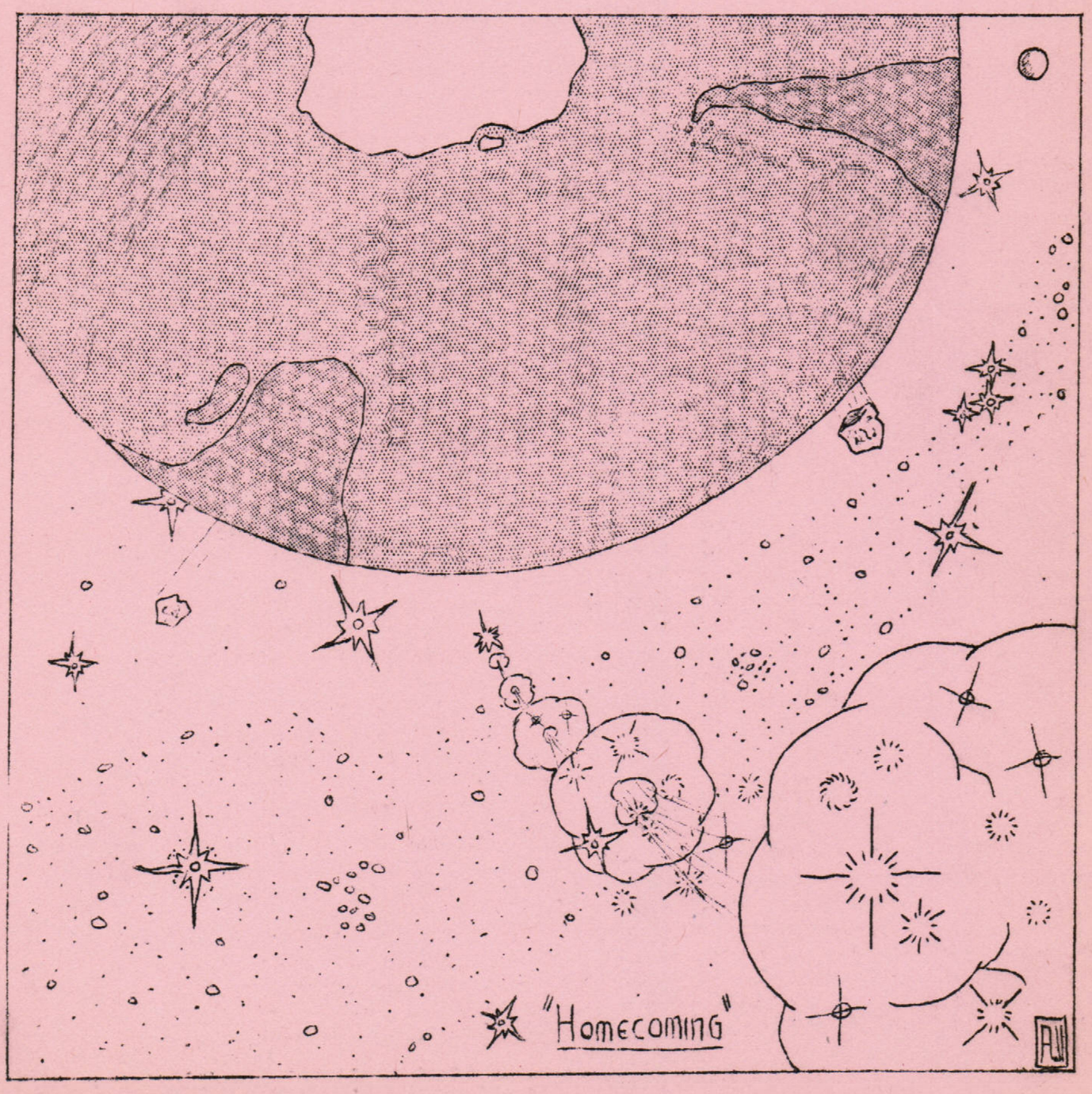
Spaceways

Vol. 4. No. 8



HORIZONS somewhere on this page should be a difference in darkness, just a little experiment!

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Here you have vol. 4, no. 2, whole number 14, EAPA number 9, of Horizons. The Great White Father, Harry Warner, Jr., 303 Bryan Place, Hagerstown, Maryland, is not responsible for bad mimeoing or typerrors. He is in a hurry! Free to EAPA members; suckers pay 10c a throw; no dead-heads whatsoever. Comments on this, the December, 1942, issue, welcomed. Horizons is published quarterly, on the Doubledoubletoilandtrouble Mimeograph.

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IN THE BEGINNING

If an EAPA magazine ever was published at top speed, this is it. I type this first stencil on the evening of November 23. The mailing goes out, theoretically, December 5, which leaves me just a little less than two weeks to do all the work on it. All the work is right--not a single of word of this is being copied from previously prepared manuscript, and I have only the haziest of ideas and notes on what to say.

All the trouble came from a quire of stencils that didn't come when due. They were ordered a month ago. They never showed up. Two weeks ago, I wrote them a postal, demanding justice. (That is, I wrote the company that sells the stencils!) No reply. One week ago, I wrote the company again, telling them to send the stencils or never darken my mailbox with their advertisements again; in other words, I broke off diplomatic relations provisionally. A half-hour ago, the quire of stencils showed up; here I sit, wondering whether I'll meet deadline. Very little chance, probably; but a Warner is always game!

Explanation about the cover on this issue: Art Widner had already done the frontispiece for the 31st issue of Spaceways, when circumstances made it impossible to continue the magazine. I think it's a good piece of work, and have asked permission to use it on this Horizons. Said permission hasn't come yet, but I'm going to go ahead and use the cover, unless Art forbids me between now and mimeoing day.

And local Draft Board No. 1 has just received the life history of Harry Warner, Jr., and after it recovers from the shameful details, will let me know where I stand. For the duration, therefore, any given issue of Horizons might be the last. By the time you get this, I should know, one way or the other, and shall inform fandom of the news it is doubtless drooling to hear.

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GLANCING BEHIND US

A couple of publications are liable to be missed herein. I'm pretty sure two or three magazines went out to EAPA members after the mailing, and because of my haste, I can't take the time to dig them out. Apologies to whomever I may miss.

Supplement to the Imag-Index. (See how hurried I am? I underscored a p in "Supplement"!) A very worth-while item, since information on these two (or this one, depending on how you look at it) magazine was badly needed and hard to obtain. Indication of the length of each item wouldn't have been amiss, though. Zizzle-Pop, no. one. What happened to Russell's typing ability? "This is,..... the 8th fanzine I have published.....a record." Just wait! Concerning the Moors, I asked Don whether he wasn't thinking of what would have happened in a larger sense than Chauvenet complains about. He was, but probably will have his views on the matter in his own publication, and I'll not take the time to look up his letter and quote from it. Let's Look at the Record. I don't feel like saying anything about it, except to marvel at the reproduction. What's the matter with EAPA members who publish only when some non-fantasy subject is brought up? The Nucleus, vol. 3, no. 4. Noteworthy is the complete success of the shadow-lettering atop the first page. Can anyone recall a time when a piece of LuGerKus lettering wasn't messed up before? Paul Spencer was shocked when Trudy

altered the quotation from Iolanthe, but comparing it with the original, I find it considerably better. So there! Paul's reviews, or rather synopses, are well done; a bit elementary to a veteran old musicologist like me, of course. One of the nicest things about The Nucleus is the way every possible bit of space is filled up, and no apologies are made for the "crime". Horizons, no. 13. I sorta messed up the stylus work on the first page; except for that, it came out pretty well, and I didn't discover upon a hasty glancing-over any perversions of sense caused by my bad habit of omitting important words when typing without dummy or copy. Yhos, no. 4. The opening pages will cause many hot words, I'm incline d to think. The author (one would recognize Ray Palmer's style anywhere!) shouldn't have minded signing his name; it doesn't seem to me to be more "dangerous" or "sensational" than, for instance, those disappointing items Mark Twain dared not publish until after his death because he thought them too advanced for his day. The only thing with which I radically disagree is the impliance that man's fighting instincts put him where he is today. Any number of other animals (both extinct and contemporary) fight just as hard as man does. I'm almost certain that man was not so extremely more pugilistic than any other animal and for this reason gained intelligence. That intelligence came from some other cause--the thumb, an inherent difference in mental structure, a fortunate combination of size, agility, and physique, or whathaveyou. Oh, yes, and I don't like, either, the idea that a nation that loses a war--like France--does so because it's decadent and practically worthless. France lost a war seventy years ago, fought against the same race as now makes up Germany. It won one against the same people twenty-five years ago. It has lost one, in this decade. Has it been automatically decadent and rejuvenated, depending upon how it fared martially? I much prefer to look upon decadence as something like the decline of the Roman Empire, that takes in hundreds of years, and is not proved because of a battle won or lost. Besides, military might doesn't by any means provide an index to a country's civilization and culture. Because Switzerland very probably wouldn't put up as stubborn resistance to an invasion as did Greece doesn't mean Greece is the better country. ... Art has since said he didn't really feel so disgusted with the NFFF. Maybe things will get moving decently by the end of this year.

Ceres, no. 1. Okay for a starter; if Suddey's enthusiasm holds up until he gains some experience and good material, this should goes places. Sustaining Program, Fall, 1942. No one is going to know my middle name, if I can help it. It could be worse, but is best left undisturbed. And I'd appreciate it if you guys wouldn't even use my middle initial. My father always uses his; I never do, and that makes it fairly easy for us to determine who gets a piece of mail that comes addressed without a Jr. or Sr. How come the inclusion in Quoteworthy Quotes of "... much ink has been shed over the question."? That doesn't seem like much more than a cliche, I've seen it used so often. I wish Jack had included, when publishing the Spoon River verses, my reasons for rejecting them. I presume I got good intelligence, because I figured out the last page starting from scratch, except for some very hazily-remembered pages illustrating use of this phonetic alphabet in a French text-book. Do I get a prize or something? Mutant, no. 1. Knowing John's habits, I suppose it's no use to ask that he send out through the EAPA the completed part of the first version of this issue. I saw a copy, and it was okay. I notice his reactions to the EAPA are typical of most new members': disappointment or even disgust at first, followed by slow realization of what wonderful people we really are. Walt's Wramblings, no. 2, I think. Enjoyable chatter, of which more should be forthcoming since Walt was rejected by the army. I would cast a pessimistic note on his prices paid for the Shiel books: only in exceptional cases would I pay more than 50c for any "remainder" or otherwise second-hand book. Fanzine Service for Fans in Service. We shoulda listened to what Speer said. Official Washington has cracked down on publishing this sort of lists. Bah. Science-Fiction Goo, no. 1. More, please! The two pages were vastly interesting; I slobber happily at the possibility of a whole issue of it. I, Sam, notice little difference between cheap and expensive stencils, in reproduc-

tive qualities. These I'm using now cost about 6c each, and give results hardly different from the SpeedOPrints and Remington Rands I've purchased at 15c apiece. I like that quotation—"For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground And tell sad stories of the death of kings." Where's it from? Almost as good is the one presumably Sam's own, ".....spinning in their graves like turbines." About Astounding, I don't think the last half-dozen issues have contained too many scientific puzzles or tricks. The trouble lies mainly in stories like "Some Day We'll Find You", which are too much like "slick" writing to be plain adventure fiction, and yet have undistinguished plots and try to make one or two new insignificant ideas carry the entire weight of the story. As I've said before, something seems to prevent stf. editors from remaining at their peak for indefinite periods, and I fear Campbell's three or four best years of editing are gone.

The Fantasy Amateur, vol. 6, no. 1. Best format it has enjoyed since the days of Agnew and Marconette. The suggested change in the constitution is mostly all right. I don't, though, see reason for retention of the ".....three years from January 1, 1943, or ..... whichever shall occur sooner". Jack told me he inserted this so that, if the war is still on three years from now, members can at that time decide whether an extension is advisable. But won't the FAPA members be able to think for themselves in the future, and make a change whenever one seems advisable, one or ten years from now? A Tour of the Evans, vol. 1, no. 3. The account of the trip was enjoyable, as fan-travel stories almost invariably are. The Pome makes me wonder why fans enjoy Mary had poems so much. There was the famous "Mary had a little lamb, Helen had roast beef", of course, and Wilson's unprintable ones. I certainly want more "gadget" stories. And I don't care very much whether the Astoundingish "psychological" touches are in them, or not. The only big advantage today's stf. has over that of ten years ago is the immensely improved writing. Astounding and for instance Amazing otherwise reach the same objective, in different ways--ordinary fiction in a fantastic setting, with the fantastic setting often not even affecting materially the course of the plot. En Garde, no. 3. I don't have "2000 A. D.", I'm afraid. I do have "A. D. 2000", but don't think it's the volume referred to. This one is by Sir Julius Vogel, a British book, and on a quick glance-through (I've not yet read it) seldom if ever mentions the United States. Incidentally, I understand only one other fan owns a copy—it's said to be very rare--and I'm almost daring to hope that I have achieved my life's ambition, that of owning a piece of fantasy not in the Ackerman collection. This ambition is so all-devouring and compelling that I refuse to call a truce because Ackerman is in the armed forces. "Fantasia" brings up a very embarrassing topic best not mentioned among fantasy book collectors. That mathematical problem, I believe, was in Ripley some months ago. Is there a solution or a catch? Things are so unsettled today that the proposed news-gathering method might not work so well. After the duration, we shall see, "we" being Unger and yr. obedient servant.

The only post-mailing arrival we can find at the moment (and I thought I had at last stopped using first person plural!) is Ackerman's War Lock. Seems like a lot of fuss over nothing, to me, and Ackerman has left himself wide open for his most ardent enemies. Very puzzling is the fact that no magazine by the San Pedro Pair appeared in this mailing. Was the reference to Fandamm in the June mailing, to a magazine scheduled for this one which wasn't finished in time, or didn't I get my copy?

Two publications which were omitted from the Warner envelope of the Sept. mailing are Stf Echo and Moonshine, both vol. 1, no. 1's. Al Ashley was kind enough to forward them. In the latter, "Orations" sounds suspiciously like Fortier, what with the love of big words. Connor's publication was a very good start, and if his army job continues to leave him time for fan publishing, this should develope into one of the FAPA's best publications. Most important is his point that active fans should at least write to the prozines once in a while. I too, alas, have greatly sinned in this respect, and plan to repent.

The mailing was disappointing, and let's hope it was an unfortunate combination of Chauvenet, Koenig, Tucker, and others taking a vacation all to the oncest.

MUSIC FOR THE FAN--II

Jacques Offenbach's "Tales of Hoffman" has suffered grievously in its spotted career. The main trouble has been the belief that it's an operetta approximately as serious as Gilbert & Sullivan. Conductors, editors, stage managers, and other deities have thus made every effort to wipe out from it every trace of sense and gravity.

In actuality, it's a tragic opera, as tragic as, for instance, "Carmen", and far better dramatically than nine out of ten operatic "tragedies". The basic theme, almost obscured through cut editions and performances, is of the conflict between ideals and reality. Hoffmann, the hero, appears throughout the opera as a young artist, searching for his ideal woman, differing from Don Quixote in that he realizes at the end of each episode his hopeless idealism. At the end, he turns away from Woman, and gives himself up to Art. All this would never be guessed from the sort of performances that are given of the opera in this country, or the piano score published by the usually most reliable house, G. Schirmer.

The arrangement of acts varies according to stage-managers' whims. It's best to consider the opera as having a prologue, three acts, and an epilogue. The prologue takes place in a tavern near a large opera house. The beautiful Stella is performing there, and all the young blades of the town wait for her. Lindorff, who appears in every act under different names as Evil, is infatuated with her, and plots to discredit Hoffmann in her eyes. Just then, Hoffmann arrives, very gloomy, trailed by his Sancho Panza, Nicklausse. At the urging of the company, he agrees to sing a song--which is about a repulsive little dwarf named Kleinzach --and in the middle of it absent-mindedly trails off into a fervent apostrophe to one of his amours. The men insist that he tell the story of his affaires de coeur, and he agrees, getting more and more drunk in the meantime. (In the Schirmer edition, Stella is not even mentioned, and Lindorff's role is reduced to two lines which make absolutely no sense by themselves. Only about half of the prologue is included.)

The first act tells of his passion for Olympia. It takes place in the home of a physicist--not, as the Schirmer translation states, a physician. He, Spalanzani, and Coppelius (the equivalent of Lindorf) have constructed a life-size, wonderful doll. Hoffmann falls hopelessly in love with her, believing her to be alive becauseof a pair of magical spectacles that Coppelius has kindly sold him. At a big party given by Spalanzani in honor of his "daughter", Hoffmann becomes madly romantic over her, and just as he is about to ask her hand in marriage, Spalanzani and Coppelius have an argument, the latter smashes the doll to bits, and Hoffmann's first tragedy is completed. This is the only act uncut in the Schirmer edition, and is at once the most amusing and most tragic. There are really funny spots in it, both in the action and in the wonderful puns in the French text, unfortunately untranslatable. And also, Hoffmann's hopeless inability to cope with the real world is shown most clearly here; in the last two acts, he at least loves flesh and blood women.

The second act occurs in Venice. Hoffmann is now mad about Giulietta. Lindorf is there, in the person of Dapertutto ("Everywhere" in Italian). He owns the shadow of Schlemil, another of Giulietta's lovers, and now the mischievous little fellow asks Giulietta to obtain for him Hoffman's reflection in a mirror. She has to obey, since he has some sort of a mystic hold over her, too. The act begins with the famous Barcarolle (the legend of its origin is too ridiculous to be worthy of a repetition here), after which Hoffmann sings a song in praise of a more vigorous method of love-making. Giulietta then proceeds to beguile from him a reflection. After a passionate love duet, he agrees. Then he looks into a mirror, finds there is no reflection, and is slightly disturbed to know that the wench was speaking literally; but he refuses to leave, as Nicklausse urges. Next, Hoffmann goes about obtaining a key belonging to Giulietta, which she wants to get back from Schlemil. It might, he thinks, win favor for him. Borrowing Dappertutto's sword, he kills Schlemil, finds the key, and takes it to Giulietta's ap-

artment. It is empty; and as Hoffmann returns to the stage, Giulietta rides off in a gondola, making love to Pitichinaccio, a minor character of the act. He realizes that he has been tricked; and Nicklausse restrains him from rushing after them as the curtain falls.

The final act is set in Munich. Hoffmann is now in love with Antonia, whose father definitely does not approve the match. Further, the girl's mother died from what was politely called consumption, at the height of her career as a singer, and Antonia's health is so precarious that she must not sing. Since she loves to sing sentimental ditties with Hoffmann, things are in a pretty bad way when the act starts. He has just moved, in an effort to escape Hoffmann. But the young lover locates them, and they secretly warble one of said love-sick tunes. It's almost too much for her; she nearly faints. Hoffmann hides when he hears her father coming; and just then Dr. Miracle, Hoffmann's nemesis for this act, happens along. He inspects and diagnoses for Antonia, in the slightly unorthodox way of doing so when she isn't in the room, asking questions to empty space, and finally conjuring up her voice in a vocal roulade when he asks her to sing. The father doesn't trust medical doctors any more than I do, and finally gets rid of him. Hoffmann proposes to Antonia; and as she is thinking it over, alone on the stage, Dr. Miracle makes another magic appearance, invisible to her, urging her to forget Hoffmann and turn to her career. She is stubborn, but he plays his trump card, and causes a picture of her mother to come to life, and urge her to sing. There follows the famous trio, at the end of which the good Dr. vanishes again, the picture goes back to its normal aspect, and the exhausted Antonia sinks down, dying from the effort. Her father and Hoffmann rush in. The poor little thing's hard luck pursues her to the end: she doesn't even get the luxury of the death-bed aria all moribund operatic sopranoes are entitled to, and gives up the ghost after a mere two dozen bars. The act ends with her father weeping, and Dr. Miracle re-appearing in time to pronounce the death sentence.

The epilogue brings us back to the tavern. Hoffmann says farewell to his memory of Olympia and Antonia, and in honor of Giulietta sings a last verse of his Kleinzach ballad. In the Schirmer edition, the opera ends here, with all the company rushing out (for no apparent reason) leaving Hoffmann slumped over his table, and Nicklausse exclaiming as he passes him, "Completely soused!" The most important part is thus omitted. In the full version, Hoffmann explains that the three women were all Stella; and Lindorf gloats that he has triumphed. Someone says Stella's performance has been a great success, everyone runs out to see her, and Hoffmann is left alone. The Muse appears to him, and Hoffmann swears the man in him is no more; the poet is re-born, and he gives himself up to her. She disappears, as the entire company, and Stella on Lindorf's arm, pass through the room. She condescendingly tosses a flower at his feet, and he follows her with his eyes, as the curtain falls.

Now, I ordinarily don't like cuts in music--or in literature, or anything else for that matter. They are excusable, it seems to me, in a musical performance only when it's impossible, for one reason or another, to present the whole of a seldom-heard work. If, for instance, a rarely heard Mahler or Bruckner symphony runs an hour and ten minutes, and it must be included on an hour-long radio program, the shorter version is better than no performance at all. But in the case of this opera, the omissions and changes that have been made are inexcusable. The music is by no means sublime, but it's some of the best French opera music ever written. And an attempt to turn this opera into a comic operetta produces a bad operatta. There are funny spots in it. The French text sparkles; there are eccentric servants scattered throughout who are deaf and stammer; and the feud between Coppelius and Spalanzani in the first act is swell. But there is something sinister always present. Offenbach's music reflects this--it never has the unrestrained gayety of his scores for ballets and his operettas. Despite the transparent music they are given to sing, the personifications of Evil are actually far more convincing than the villains in most completely serious operas.

All this shows up most clearly in the second act, even if the abortive Schir-

mer edition makes some of the action incomprehensible. The final moments of it make one of the greatest scenes in all opera. The duel, murder, and denouement all take place to the accompaniment of the Barcarolle, very softly first in the orchestra and then in an off-stage chorus. Its placid strains, without any alteration in the harmony or arrangement, somehow become sinister and menacing--far more so than any cliche like high tremalo violins could be. The dialog is kept down to the barest minimum, with extraordinary skill by the librettist; as much as possible is explained by the stage action, and the short utterances of the characters say as much as long speeches could, like Giulietta's "Il a ma clef. Je t'aime!" (This dialog, incidentally, is not sung, by spoken, at the end of the act--a transition tremendously effective in opera when used at the right spot.)

One other peculiar difficulty is inherent in the story. The four women should be sung by the same person, for dramatic reasons; but no soprano can really handle the coloratura of Olympia and the dramatic music given to Giulietta with equal ease. On the other hand, few opera companies can afford four leading sopranoes for one performance, as would be necessary if the parts were divided up; and this may have helped to keep the opera from being more popular. A sore and delicate spot is Nicklausse. He's a male character, but following the operatic tradition that very young men shall be sung by mezzo-sopranoes, the illusion is sorta shattered. There is no real reason why the part should not be sung by a tenor, except that a balance between masculine and female voices would thus be lost.

If Hollywood ever decides to produce an opera on the screen, this would be an ideal one to use. It has plenty of tunes, a plot, tragedy and comedy, and could be reduced to managable length for the purpose by omitting a good bit of the recitative.

Next issue, regretfully turning from opera, we shall waste a few stencils on a glance at how the legend of Faust has been treated (and mistreated) by musicians. Be on hand early, and get a good seat.

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ANOTHER YEAR OF UNKNOWN

The six 1942 issues of Unknown gave me more pleasure, probably, than all the other stf., fantasy, and weird magazines I read during the year. Astounding had no brilliant issues, and a couple of very bad ones, I became increasingly disgusted with Famous Fantastic Mysteries, and only isolated stories in all the other publications proved worthwhile. Campbell managed, on the other hand, to do the most important thing with Unknown--get six novels without a bad dud; and the shorts were on a whole better than ever before. Following with comments are my ratings, from 1 to 10, as I marked immediately after reading. Upon re-reading, or even re-consideration, some of them would change, but we'll not bother about that.

February, 1942. The Undesired Princess. 8. Certain fans (I'll not mention a couple who were once so active in Columbia) have made it a point of honor to be disgusted with everything de Camp writes nowadays. I was thoroughly disgusted with a couple of his novels, but have the modesty to admit, if someone coaxes me, that I'm sensible enough to recognize a good story when I see it. This one was topped by L. Sprague only with "The Mathematics of Magic" and "Lest Darkness Fall". The basic idea was a swell one, the characters unforgettable, and the last scenes --where most such novels are apt to ravel apart--went through beautifully. Design for Dreaming. 6. I don't care too much for this, or most stories that concern (a) gangsters or (b) Hollywood people mixed up with fantasy. Etaoin Shrdlu. 7. I'm surprised now that I didn't give it something higher. Does anyone know, by the way, why a linotypist uses that combination of letters? Is it tradition, or is that the way a linotype's keys are arranged? And if the latter, why aren't they the same as on a typewriter? The Shoes. 5. It signalled its ending too far off, and was unconvincing for several reasons. He Didn't Like Cats. 6. I do like them, very much, and think anyone who would kick one deserves a fate at

least as bad as this one, and probably more so. It's justice! The Refugees. 6. As best I can remember, it concerned the Little People, and made no strong impression either way. The Sunken Land. 6. Apparently I reacted to thisin much the same way. In His Own Image. 5. And what is there to say about this? Nothing, I fear. The issued averaged up to 6.7057, giving the longer stories proportionally greater importance in the figuring; see one of the last issues of Spaceways for full exciting details.

April, 1942. Prelude to Armageddon. 8. If not quite as good as Cartmill's first novel, this still hit the right spot. It's quite possible that it's a better story, and merely made less effect on me because it came after that first one. Although the work Cartmill turns out is slightly like Heinlein's, I claim the distinction of being the only fan in the country not to tell correspondents that I had suddenly realized the two authors were the same. The Compleat Werewolf. 6. The writing, and especially the dialogue, is of almost slick quality. I've never read any of Boucher's detective stories, and so can't tell whether he improves by writing fantasy; irregardless, a few more authors like him would not be amiss in Unknown. Pobby. 6. This story left me with mixed feelings: I still can't decide whether it's very good or very bad. For one thing, I very smartly decided that it wasn't so convincing, because no author would think of trying to write an entire novel around the theme, as did Hugh Gibbons, which is as old as the hills and not elaborate enough for anything more than a short; then a correspondent reminded me that the story within the story was obviously supposed to be as ridiculous as possible. Then too, the dialog was a little overdone for my taste. (Result of hurrying: read "dialect" for "dialog".) Best thing about the story was the last couple of lines. Jesus Shoes. 7. A few years ago I might have called this my favorite fantasy short of all time, for I used to revel in this particular type of tale, and it's one of the best. The Room. 9! That is the highest rating I gave to any story in 1942. I'm very depressed that it got so little mention, in the fanzines or --And Having Write--. I think it's every bit as good as some of Stephen Vincent Benet's best work, and am certain that it would be in one of the short story yearbooks, if it had appeared in a slick publication. Besides, it reminded me of my beloved Theodore Roscoe, who used to turn out so many swell stories for Argosy and has apparently quit writing. Census Taker. 6. This stowaway might just as well have not been noticed. I jotted the title and rating down on the contents page of Unknown just so I'd remember it was there, when doing this review. Issue as a whole was better--7.1429. L. Sprague de Camp's letter is the most convincing and unvitriolic debunking of the prophecy legend I've ever seen.

June, 1942. Solomon's Stone. 6. The critics of de Camp had just cause for complaint this time. It's easily the poorest novel Unknown ran in 1942, and comes very close to having been a waste of reading-time. It has all the worst features of L. Sprague's work in abundance, and the good points are just numerous enough to save it. Al Haddon's Lamp. 5. If this had appeared before the story of a similar nature in Fantastic Adventures (by McGivern, I believe) I'd have raised the roof. As it was, I read them at about the same time--within a few weeks of one another, having bought the FA second-hand. It was a remarkable demonstration of how two mass production writers will work along the same line. And Bond certainly isn't at his best in this. Grab Bags Are Dangerous. 6. A lot of Long's stories--like this one--are based on ideas that are more interesting before than after reading. I can't put my finger on what prevents Long's fantasy from going over successfully. It's good, but lacks something. Tomorrow. 6. Some of Arthur's best writing for a fantasy magazine. He still doesn't turn out for Unknown or Weird Tales the stories he did for Argosy, though. The Ghost of Me. 5. Just a fugitive from the new Weird Tales. And while I always enjoyed Cartier's illustrations, I don't see the sense in the way Campbell keeps inserting them at irrelevant, sometimes irreverent, spots, as on page 88. The Idol of the Flies. 7. I agree with Paul Spencer's idea, that it might profitably have omitted the literally fantastic paragraphs. Even if Campbell praised the writing a little highly,

it was exceptionally well written. Slight disagreement with the blurb: calling the "hero" of the story "one of the most exquisitely nasty brats" is just about the same as saying that Othello was one of the most wickedly vicious murderers. The Old Ones Hear. 6. It is one of my shameful ambitions to study Greek some-day, and generally steep myself in the lure, legends, and traditions of that language and ancient power. I thus dislike on pure principle stories that defile the beautiful-because-it's-so-long-dead civilization by mixing it up with a blitz-krieg. Issue ended up at 5.9286. The "On Books and of Magic and Prophecy" art-icle was extremely interesting.

August, 1942. The shade of green on the cover is too bilious for my taste. Hell Is Forever. 9! This is another story that didn't get the praise, and more important, the discussion, it merited. This high rating is sort of provis-ional, depending on how I feel when I re-read it. I've not yet found time to go through it again. Several places in it seemed to bog the whole thing down; but there's a remarkable unity despite the loose structure and nature of the story, and the completely vicious set of characters are exceptionally convincing. Bester, mark me words, is a comer. The Ghost. 6. I expected more than it gave. The "explanation" of ghosts was completely disappointing. Van Vogt's growing tendency to make his stories as hard-to-follow as possible didn't help. However, the new slants and the character of the ghost kept it from mediocrity. Though Poppies Grow. 6. Does del Rey actually believe in the sophormoric "message" he has written here? I hardly think a person with his sense would. The story is spoiled by this--once again, good writing is nullified. Besides, the stor-ies whose main characters don't know who they are or what they must do and why they must do it, and require 15,000 words to find out, have been numerous enough to be tiresome. The Jumper. 6. Is the theory on which this story is based really sound? I can't help thinking of a pair of fellows whom I heard on a radio program years ago, supposedly unrehearsed, who talked in perfect unison extempor-aneously. Everything's Jake. 5. The same thing has been done too often. The Hill and the Hole. 6. A little too restrained for me; most of the story tried to tell you how terrible the hole was, before any concrete evidence of that ter-ror had been given. Fighters Never Quit. 5. Just another horror of war. The Wisdom of the East. 7. De Camp at his best, and one of the two or three stfan-tasy stories over which I chuckled in 1942. I wonder, did de Camp get paid for the conversations like: "----- --- -- ---- -!"? If he did--! Step into My Garden. 7. Excellent; but see above remarks on Long. The Bargain. 7. Some-thing is screwy with the main thesis--that this particular type of immortality would be bad stuff because the recipient could no longer learn anything. It--oh, fiddlesticks! I'm thinking of a story in another issue, which we'll come to in a few lines. More evidence of the way I'm hurrying: this particular one, now that I look closely, was something else again, and outstanding for the perfect ending. The poem this issue was exceptionally good. Rating as a whole, 6.866666666666, and so forth.

October, 1942. The Unpleasant Profession of Jonathan Hoag. 9. John River-side, whoever he may be, has written a humdinger. Even in the very title is there a stroke of genius--the subtle something conveyed by the spelling of Johnathan without the first h. Very few readers, I'll wager, were able to lay down the story after the first couple of pages. The puzzle of what worse than dried blood could be under one's fingernails would attrack the interest of a Buddha. The entire story is a wholesome compromise between the traditional Gothic type of weird story and the "modern" horrors that Weird Tales is now buying, particularly Bloch's and Kuttner's, like the Lefty Feep yarns. Compliments of the Author. 7. I accidentally glanced at the last lines of the story before beginning it, while leafing through the magazine, which spoiled to some extent my enjoyment potential. It still seemed reading time well spent. The Frog. 6. Miller is either very good or very lousy; here's a case of his being in good form. Noteworthy are the tremendous paragraphs he gets away with. Magician's Dinner. 7. I get a feeling when reading most of Jane Rice's stories that they're over-written, and yet it

HORIZONS next issue 181 starts on a stunning cover [illegible] you can hardly wait for March to come.

doesn't disturb my enjoyment of them in the least. Letter to an Invisible Woman. 5. Unimportant and in fact just the least bit ridiculous. Are You Run-Down, Tired--. 6. The ending saved it from flopping. Classic comment of the year was the one someone made that the plot was taken from Doc Lowndes' "The Gourmet". The New One. 6. No classic comments occur. There was pretty good suspense, though. The Lie. 5. Obvious. The Goddess' Legacy. 7. I feel much the same about it as the previously mentioned Grecian story. This was much better written, and more convincing. In this case, the easily apparent coming end didn't spoil the enjoyment. The first two poems in the issue aren't so hot. "Contemplation" is one of the better re-writes of a certain famous soliloquy by a certain famous English poet which occurs in a certain famous play, spoken by a certain famous Danish character. But the next-to-last line contains a bad typerror, in that it isn't an obvious one like "wihch" would be. "This" is obviously meant for "his", but the passage makes a certain amount of sense either way, and a careless reader would just think that it's "some more of that nutty poetry--'his' doesn't refer to anything." Issue: 7.20.

December, 1942. The cover is a nice gory red, all right, but I don't know why any dark color such as this should be used. It practically makes useless the cover blurbs, which are supposed to attract attention, by making them very difficult to read. The Sorcerer's Ship. 8. Remarkably good work, retaining some of Merritt's best tricks, and yet being far from an imitation. Yanuk is a character any author might be proud of. The Elixir. 7. Jane Rice' best of the year. I've said before that she sometimes writes too much like a woman, and have since learned she's two other people, a man and a woman. I still insist no man could have written a story like this. Transients Only. 7. Despite the way it faded out at little at the end, very amusing, and it contains one of the nicest of all ghosts in literature. The mock-horrific night in the haunted house is classic. The Golden Age. 6. This is the immortality yarn I started to comment on too soon. What I was going to say was: the immortality carried with it inability to learn anything new, causing Smith to make a wrong diagnosis and so forth. But what is "learning" but memory, nd the ability to apply what those memories convey? Smith was able to drive a car, and he had no trouble in remembering something that had happened, or how to open the door of a mechanical refrigerator. This, of course, is aside from the main point of whether immortality is a curse or a blessing; but it did take a lot of interest from the story's message and the effectiveness of the good ending. The Wall. 6. Now that Arthur is no longer selling to Argosy, he's letting Unknown have his better work. The unfortunate thing about this story was the last four paragraphs. Omitted, the story would have ten times the punch. The Hag Sôleen. 7. Good stuff; and a collaboration like this between a famous and unknown writer always makes me wonder whether the unknown one wrote the story and Campbell farmed it out to a better writer for polishing or re-writing. It's getting monotonous, but the ending in this case again helped the story immeasurably. It Will Come to You. 5. Pish-tush. More hedidn'tknowwhohewasorwhathismissionwas. The poem wasn't bad, Campbell sort of gypped us in the editorial, and the issue wound up at 7.2143.

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PLUG

This should have gone to Liebscher, but I just got the information and couldn't hope to pass it along to him in time to make this mailing. The Nations Bookstore, 217 East 170th St., New York, N. Y., has several fantasies in book form at low prices. For 50c each, you may purchase "Useless Hands", by Farrere, "Utopia, Inc.," by Geske, and "In the Sealed Cave" by Herrman, in new condition; and in good used condition, "Maza of the Moon", by Kline, "Edge of the World", by Rodney; "Dracula", by Stoker, and "World Set Free", by Wells. All except the Kline and Stoker books are $2 editions. For 69c: "The Dark Glass", by Gost, and Weinbaum's "New Adam", in new condition. And for 89c, new, a scholarly-sounding volume, non-fiction, entitled "Experience with the Supernatural in Early Christian Times", by Case. If you order from them, mention my name, and maybe they'll give me a commission or something equally nice.

REJECTED! --LIGHT

No, this stencil isn't a fugitive from Sustaining Program. On thispage was originally scheduled Joe Fann's Journal. But here I am, trying to meet a deadline, and haven't written that article, which is a little too difficult to stencil without a previous draft. Therefore, this review, which I vainly submitted to Canada's fanzine, Light. J. Fann's Journal will appear next issue.

VAN LOON'S LIVES, by Hendrik Willen Van Loon. Illustrations by the author. 886 pp., $3.98. Simon & Schuster. 1942.

To recommend this book because it can be classified as fantasy would be equivalent to saying all fans should read "Macbeth" or "Hamlet" because they contain ghosts. But it is my hope that its fantasy spring-board will impel some of you to read it, who might not do so otherwise.

The book tells of a series of dinners the author and some friends held, about ten years ago, in a small village in Holland. The unusual part of these parties is the guests, all of whom have been dead for periods varying from thirty years to more than a hundred thousand years. They are brought back to life for an evening, by a process the author plans to disclose a little later on, under certain restrictions. They cannot, for instance, say much about where they now "live"--although a few drop hints which would seem to indicate that the traditional reward for a virtuous, God-fearing life isn't all it's cracked up to be. The author, wisely, invites only a few at a time; usually only one or two per evening, since that seems to make for the best conversation. Erasmus, the very first of these guests, is given an extended leave of absence and is present at all the future dinners; the rest stay only for a few hours. The guests themselves range from Leonardo da Vinci and Descartes to Queen Elizabeth and Confucius. Only one invited person cannot accept: that's the Buddha. He, is seems, had left for a century of meditation fifty-seven years earlier, and so had to send his regrets.

The author and his friends plan with exquisite care their menus for these little gatherings; said menus range from the most specialized and complicated dishes one could imagine down to carbolic acid and the contents of the town reservoir for little friends Dante and Rabelais bring along. Music is also furnished, via phonograph, with as much care, although it was very difficult in some instances to determine what someone like Plato would enjoy.

The guests, on the whole, are well behaved. There are several unfortunate occasions, to be sure: once, in an experimental mood, The World's Greatest Inventor was invited, and he turned out to be quite a character. Napoleon was not what might have been expected, and Robespierre and Torquemada left a bad taste in everyone's mouth. On the whole, however, the great men and women of the past behaved beautifully, and seemed remarkably glad to come back to this imperfect world from their perfect one, if only for the evening. Emily Dickenson even loses her anti-social tendencies, and mingles freely with Chopin and Rossini, who all came the same evening. Difficulties of language are always overcome in one way or another: Mr. Van Loon knows quite a few tongues, most of the guests were learned men who knew several languages themselves; everyone manages to understand one another after a fashion.

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The book itself is along Van Loon's pet idea of personalizing and reviving the dusty past. Each famous man or woman is given a biography--sometimes brief, sometimes at length, always reflecting the writer's viewpoints and preferences. It's impossible to read the book without learning a lot you never knew before about the great people of the past.

Read for mere enjoyment, as an interesting and often amusing volume, it's fine. But like most of the books being written today, it has "significance". As Gerald Johnson wrote in the New York Herald Tribune about the volume, "....it is a tragic

book, far more profoundly tragic than most of the horror stories that have come from Europe. They at worst deal with destruction of human bodies, but this deals with the incessantly repeated destruction of human hopes and aspirations and ideals."

And as one finishes the book, he suddenly realizes the terrible truth, that almost without exception each celebrated man in this book either spent a life of misery or devoted his days to making those around him miserable. Van Loon, throughout the book, searches for the answer to the question of how men may best live and be governed, while a few hundred miles away a little man named Hitler is ominously rising to power in Germany. None of the guests quite succeeds in giving a satisfactory formula, not even the last and most honored guest of all, Thomas Jefferson--although Van Loon makes him say something that is apparently Van Loon's own solution to the problem.

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Not to be forgotten are the author's own illustrations to the book--a hundred of them, approximately, and many in full colors. They are well up to the standard of Van Loon sketches.

Van Loon, it is said, wrote this book to immortalize the little Holland town he knew and loved. Through the book, that Holland will live, regardless of what the Nazis may do to it.

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ON DIT

Here's a letter that by rights belongs with the last comments on Spaceways, which Larry Farsaci is publishing in his revived Golden Atom. It came in a little too late to be included there, however, and besides, says some other things that wouldn't be relevant in The Readers Always Write. Therefore, hark to waht Eric Frank Russell wrote on October 24:

"Was entertained by Webster's article on the subject of three fandoms. There is a considerable amount of truth in his analysis though, personally, I'd have been tempted to divide them on a different basis, namely, those who've had a woman, those who are having a woman, and those who hope to have a woman. The first lot now read the Bible, the second read the pro mags, the third read the fan mags. Webster's comment on the borderline or unclassifiable cases did not include the few who have some claim to belong to all three fandoms simultaneously, and on his analysis I reckon that I have a sort of multi-dimensional co-existence in all three plus a couple more classes which he hasn't listed. As justification, I've just finished reading a weighty tome on abstract matters by that Russian Ouspensky and have followed up with my daughter's current copy of Mickey Mouse Weekly. So where would Webster put me? " .....The readers' letters, as usual, I read first.....I notice that one reader wants to drag in Perdue and mobilize the Vitons--'bout time he got told that the Vitons are the property of yours truly. My American agents hold a stock of them at 79, 7th Ave., N. Y. C., whence they can be obtained at a buck per. No cash, no Vitons. " .....All the signs and portents over here are suggestive of a long war. When the squabble began I prophesied that it was going to be a long one, the sole basis of the crystal- "

No, darn it! Much as I'd love to finish that paragraph, I'd better not. I didn't ask permission to quote it, and Russell's position in the RAF, as a prozine writer, and possibly other things might make it embarrassing for him. Besides, I would like British fans to get this issue of Horizons. Apparently no copies of "Circus Day Is Over" got past the censors, and the rest of that paragraph might cause confiscation of this Horizons, for the same reasons.

So on to Milty Rothman, whose rank in the Army is vague at this moment, as the following will show. He wrote to me over a period of ten days, starting on Nov. 13 in Aberdeen, Maryland, and winding up on Nov. 23, "in a stable stall a few yards from the race track" at Camp Santa Anita, California:

"At first I was slightly illat the thought of a troop train--you can imagine a crowded, noisy, riotous mob of soldiers creating havoc around you on a long trip. But this train will be somewhat different, as all ~~fax~~ of us are non-coms or acting-noncoms,so it will be a good crowd to be along with. Aside from a day of KP, the trip ought to be a treat. '' The reason I say, above, that this train will be different is the fact that there is a tremendous difference between a group of non-coms and privates. They really do pick out the cream of the crop when they pick the non-coms. '' Right now I'm what they call an "acting corporal". When I've had sufficient experience I'll be a real corporal. Before then, however, I'll maybe be in Officers' Candidate School. I applied for it the other day, and have high hopes of being accepted. '' Your sad announcement"--the Spaceways obituary--"is further evidence of something I've been noticing. Fandom is collapsing. If the FAPA can manage to keep afloat we may survive. I do hope you do your best to keep the FAPA going. You know, we wondered how England manages to keep its fandom going, but when you boil it down, they have no more there than we would have if we could just keep the FAPA. ~~xx~~ '' Well, here I am in California. What a trip! Six days we spent in a Pullman Car..... '' Now I can divulge the real reason I enlisted! I determined to come to LA in '42 at any cost--even if I had to join the army to do it."

It would be swell to quote Dough Webster's entire letter of July 14, from beginning to end. But that would take up half of this issue of Horizons, and you must be content with one or two paragraphs: ~~x~~

"Rather uncanny what you were saying about Russell Chauvenet and his conclusions about activity in fandom, &c. Just the day before I read your letter (I was so busy I hadn't time even to read it!), I remember saying precisely the same thing to Eric, almost word for word, as we were wandering through a wood about 1 o'clock in the morning, cussin' & discussin'; and he agreed sadly that he'd been thinking precisely the same thing about himself. '' Russell's perfectly correct, of course. I almost despair, sometimes, of ever learning anything, or of widening my experience and outlook to any perceptible extent. And to think of all the time--all the evenings, afternoons, weeks, months, years--which I've wasted utterly and completely... God, I feel at once ashamed and disgusted with myself. And the more so, too, because I'm making very little effort to do anything about it. True, with the present issue I'm giving up Fay for the summer, and, I hope, can I but master the will-power, for good. And this makes an enormous difference --much more than I'd ever realised when I was editing it. In the last few weeks I've read far, far more than I have during any such period in the last several years, and at last, after a couple of years' idleness, I've done a little--just a little--work again. This is only the beginning, too. But then, what can I do apart from that? As you probably know, I can't resume anything like 'normal' activity again till after the war, since now I'm isolated away from all my friends and from all the coquetries of culture. But I <u>could</u> more or less completely forget about fandom, as Russell suggests, and I could quit writing so many letters. And I seem to be making no more to do it, great though I know the benefit would be. Why? Well, I dunno. A few weeks ago I'd just have called myself a fool and accepted stoically the fact that I would carry on with fandom. Now, I'm not at all sure. So if you hear the news, in the next few months, that I've quit, don't be too surprised. And I'm no Fortier....."

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WORDS OF THE WISE

This girl....had exactly the German way; whatever was in her mind to be delivered, whether a mere remark, or a sermon, or a cyclopedia, or the history of a war, she would get it into a single sentence or die. Whenever the literary German dives into a sentence, that is the last you are going to see of him till he emerges on the other side of his Atlantic with the verb in his mouth.--Mark Twain.

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There has been no time to proof-read this issue of Horizons; forgive, please, any statements that make even less sense than usual, and consider them typerrors.