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The beautiful blank space above with which this issue of Horizons commences not only is superbly symbolic of its editor's mind at the moment, but answers the requests of the throngs who clamor for more "white" space in Horizons, and enables the use of a stencil which got off to a bad start. This, then, is the September, 1946, issue of Horizons, volume 8, number 1, FAPA number 22, whole number 28, made up through the joint efforts of the Doubledoubletoilandtrouble Mimeograph, and Macbeth, Mr. Underwood's little contraption. Harry Warner, Jr., 303 Bryan Place, Hagerstown, Maryland, is still responsible for its existence.

Memories from Manila

B. T. His Mag: Truth Is Stranger inspires me to wonder publicly what in the fan causes him to dislike so the little trivial time-consumers, when he is willing to spend dozens of hours on things that the majority of persons would consider to be the height of futility? I know that I am much more bothered about the trivial matters than the man on the street. I don't regret in the least the 12 to 15 hours required to produce an issue of Horizons, but I do detest the task of finding wrapping paper and string to prepare it for mailing to the official editor, and the actual wrapping, a 15-minute task. Writing a six-page letter causes me far less trouble than walking a block out of my way to buy a stamp with which to mail it. ' ' Though I used to hold the opposite view, I don't think movies are quite as bad as all that; probably those 14 years in a projection booth are to blame for Bob's attitude, just as a newspaper's music critic can't possibly react normally to a concert because he's forced to listen to ten times as much music as most people. I have yet to see a moon pitcher that interested me as much as even an indifferent novel, but attendance about once a week has turned out to be beneficial to me psychologically. Don't ask me to explain how. ' ' Only the established writers can get away with leaving the apostrophe out of contractions. It's written "dont" all through the new Penguin edition of Shaw's "Major Barbara" for example. Fantasy Amateur: The advisory ballot is an excellent idea, but I have already changed my mind on one of the answers: after marking approved to no. 13, I've come to believe that it it would be better to leave such matters to the discretion of the secretary-treasurer, a la Morojo, and change it only in the event that some day the s-ts began abusing this power. I definitely want to see a tabulation of the results of this voting, incidentally. Plenum: A superb job on the null-A article; more comments later on in this issue of Horizons. If the laureate committees don't get a key o punch, Milt should be remembered for the art award, on the strength of his stick-men ballet in this issue. Fantast's Folly: I'd like to see Sam explain at length the things he dislikes about the "Americanised" way of life that he fears. I can guess at some of them, but remember that the sort of "Americanised planet" that Stapledon wrote about isn't due to come, simply because things have changed a lot in this country since Olaf wrote "Last and First Men". Honest and truly, the Merritt was chosen at random. The Voice: I couldn't read the coupon, and would like to know what the I.S.P. is all about so I can feel justified in asking all my friends to join it. The Phan-

tagraph: Why not reprint next issue that Sterling North review of the Viking anthology, DAW? Horizons: It is very nice to see that my article on Hawthorne has already resulted in publication of a new edition of his short stories, and the allegedly biographical feature in the August issue of Reader's Digest. Ven-
al: I still fail to see the point in the extreme manner of obscuring his meanings to which Lowndes is inclined when writing poetry. Of course we don't want anything so painfully obvious as the quotes in Falling Petals, but there's no need for go quite this far. I still like "Sachs", though, and think I know what Lowndes is driving at, if the title means what I think it does. Falling Petals:
Why suffer one disappointment after another distributing publications like this one to an audience which you surely realize won't receive them cordially, Larry?
a: If an imaginary inhabitant of the planet Venus would be called a Venutian, wonder what Webster would recommend as the name for a real inhabitant of the planet Venus? Very nice to learn that the work on the index is resuming. And I promise to comment on the Palmer statistics if I ever am in a position to understand them; meanwhile, my jaw continues to hang loosely in awe and amazement.
Ad Interim: Please, Frank, be a good civilian and live up to the great prospects as one of FAPA's most valuable members that you've demonstrated with this publication. Phanteur: It's nice to see the poetry again, some of which is really excellent, and DBT's article on fandom and life remains a valuable contribution to our cultural philosophizing. Were those red and blue streaks supposed to be ingrained in the cover paper? Fantasy Times: The second paragraph on page four fails to reveal precisely which member of the A Men it was who contributed A. Langley Searles to the auction. The success of that Newark affair would seem to augur well for a big attendance at the 1947 convention in Philly, although some of the New York area people are going to be sorely tempted to spend only a day there. Mahope: Agreed that we need something to do for the pro field what the Fencyclopedia did for fandom, but I don't believe that inclusion of pro staff in the fan volume would work. Even if a lot of the little items are combined together in a new Fencyclopedia as a space-saver, the new edition will probably run from 50 to 50 pages longer than the original one, counting only fan stuff—that much extra space is going to be needed for chronicling things that have turned up since 1944, and for the things that were omitted from the original volume. Putting pro material in as well would make a volume impossibly large for mimeographing. My idea is to issue a ~~fan~~ Proyclopedia independently; I even typed up a lot of ideas, notes, and first drafts of articles, before coming to the conclusion that the lack of order in my collection makes it impossible for me to try to tackle the job. Parceling out the important articles to authorities on the particular subjects is a good idea, but committees really aren't needed. One guy who is thoroughly qualified should be given complete charge of the writing and editing of the book. It would be up to him to assign those articles to the people most suited, and to set a deadline for receipt of the completed articles. Those that weren't in his hands by the time limit, he would write himself, to eliminate the weak-link difficulties that usually beset cooperative fan projects. Pan-
Dango: And Burbee is married, isn't he? Methinks Fran has missed the point regarding Fewmets; look in "The Sword in the Stone" or a dictionary. Sustaining Programs: Very little to comment on, mostly because of the passage of time. It is quite remarkable how the passage of a year or two makes a retort seem utterly superfluous. Both issues thoroughly enjoyed, though. Devil Take the Hindmost: It's hard to believe that the same Langley Searles who issues Fantasy Commentator is responsible for this. As everyone else will probably hasten to state, Crutch has never attended a fan gathering in the United States, so you must be thinking of someone else—possibly of when Frederick was a little lad. And why refer to Ackerman as "parasite"? His fan dealing certainly hasn't made him rich—not like some other dealers, anyway—and if you simply refer to a dependence on fan activity to make life worth living, chances are that Langley Searles has spent more time in the field during the last couple of years than Ackerman. Fantasy Commentator: Here, fortunately, the atmosphere changes to that of one of the three or four top fanzines of today. The Moskowitz history continues to interest me more

each installment, since it is now emerging from the prehistoric days into the period with which I'm well acquainted. Sam is showing a remarkable fairness and is accurate beyond expectations, as far as I can judge. Fan-Tods: Tom's review of Korzybski is disappointing, and the math is still far over my head; aside from these minor difficulties, another excellent issue. Art's ghostory is excellent as far as atmosphere and setting go; a novel twist or idea in the plot would probably have sold it. Although reading an issue of Weird Tales these days gives me the impression that the editors simply select at random eight or ten stories which aren't hopelessly bad for each issue; no other standards are apparent. Science-Fiction Savant: I don't catch on to the ending of the Fischer story: was that supposed to be death outside, or another survivor, or was it intended to read ambiguously, a la "Lady, or the Tiger?" I'll bet the writer of that story from Camelot didn't last long with the AP; imagine, waiting until the second sentence to tell about the corpse! Canadian Fandom: I am fascinated by the peculiar, undtrusive brand of humor that permeates the Hurter and Taylor fanzines, and am wondering whether it might not be a national trait of the Canadians or something. The only way of improving Canfan, Beak, would be to publish material by no one except Taylor and Hurter. Tomorrow on the March: This inevitably brings to mind such names as Horatio Alger, Jr., and Mary Baker Eddy; apparently van Vogt buries good things under several thick layers of crap in non-fiction as well as fiction. I suspect that Korzybski would faint at the discussion of the brain's function on page four and the beginning of page five. The whole article is worth reading, might be applicable to isolated cases, but its overall value is highly doubtful. Still, thanks are due to Dale Hart or Everett Evans or whoever it was who made it available for distribution without commercializing it. The Timebinder: The concluding paragraph on page six just is not correct, Everett. You'll find I'm right if you'll take the trouble to check the files of any daily paper over a period of several months. Of course you get a wrong impression, if you aren't careful, by the manner in which disputes make news by developing over a period of days or weeks, then are finally settled one single day. That means the bickering receives much more publicity than the agreements, but I don't think there's any way in which that can be avoided, as long as nations continue to bicker and as long as people want a daily report on the progress of discussions. Is the Russell Wood who appears in the letter section the same one who was making remarks about "dead Japs are good Japs" a few years back? If so, that must have been about the time that he found "a dearth of intelligent thinking about anything" in the fan field. The _____ Thing: Another true delight to the eyes and sense of humor. I like particularly the idea of reviewing all sorts of fan publications, whether or not EAPA, in the Crane fashion; it gets your ideas in print without requiring the fuss and bother of writing to the editor of the magazine who may decide not to use a letter section in the next issue after all. I have high hopes that the Crane-Wesson combination will be able to click when it reaches Japan. Even if you can't do it on such an elaborate scale from over there, please keep publishing! ' That post-mailing promised in The Fantasy Amateur hasn't shown up here yet, and even if it does appear there'll be no time to read it before the mailing deadline.

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Through VAPA With Rod and Camera

Only one issue of Horizons—the last one—was needed to convince me that this scheme of distributing through both the EAPA and the VAPA is never going to be satisfactory for me or for the VAPA members, nor is it fair to ask the brethren of the EAPA to endure a page or more of stuff that is irrelevant to their interests. Therefore, it gives a promise. By the end of March, 1947, my future should be fairly well outlined. That is, I'll either be in the army, or the draft will, presumably, no longer be threatening because even if it's renewed by congress, there'll be a lot of boys reaching the age of 19 and becoming eligible

for induction. If I'm still civilian by spring, and have prospects of remaining in that highly desirable condition, I'll begin issuing a separate publication for the VAPA. Until that time, I don't want to start it up, because of that uncertainty factor and because there are several other fan undertakings I'd like to find time to do this winter. This issue and presumably the next one of Horizons will be in both the FAPA and the VAPA; a change for the better after that will occur, if selective service cooperates. ' Vanguard Amateur: The new constitution is much more satisfactory, although even further deleting would do no harm. It's sort of superfluous to say that the manager "has complete control over association business", when the rights of the board of advisors are detailed only a few lines further along; and did anyone ever hear of any publisher taking the trouble to make 50 "identical" copies of a carbon-copied publication? Stef-antagay: Still the only thing in either fan APA mailing that I actually hunt for as soon as the envelopes arrive. The advertisements are better than ever this time, the rebuttal to van Vogt sounds convincing enough, and I even like the limericks. That first "joke" on page 13 has happened entirely too often among quite educated people to be funny, though. Check on the matter of violin concerto cadenzas. That instrument sounds lousy when it's played doublestopped, or when harmonics and most of the other tricks of the virtuoso trade are used. One thing might be pointed out: composers have always been making the mistake of trying to write unaccompanied cadenzas based on themes which take for granted an accompaniment. That's why Bach's unaccompanied music for the fiddle sounds good; the themes were deliberately written for the instrument. : Shucks, we know you're right, damon; no need for proving your points about van Vogt—you're wasting too much time hunting up quotations. Tumbrils: Sorry, but no can do; I didn't become a member of the FAPA until around the ninth or tenth mailing. Why confine to symphonic works the choices of music suitable for small tots? Several of the choices are okay as cited here, though I don't think the Taylor, Dukas, and Moussorgsky numbers have much to recommend them other than their "programs", which they don't follow obviously enough for most children to grasp. Did you forget Haydn's "Toy" symphony? The best possibilities are outside the symphony orchestra, though. The outward simplicity and melodic qualities of Schubert's songs should make them naturals; I think the "Winterreise" cycle would be particularly good. Ditto for many of Jensen's songs, if they haven't become so unfashioned that they're no longer available on recordings, particularly his setting of Sir Water Scott poems. Then there's the big field of chamber music. No one, kid or adult, could possibly resist the delights of the last movement of the E flat string trio, or the G minor piano quartet. Schumann wrote three sonatas for children which haven't lost too much of their value, but are seldom heard; and there's plenty of Grieg to supply piano music for the very young. The field of organ music doesn't offer much unless you go back before Bach; some of the very old organ music in the first volume of Bomet's "Historic Organ Recitals", published I think by Ditson, has most of the desired qualities. Couperin might tickle the kiddies, just for the sake of the queer titles he thought up for his little pieces. I'm not too well acquainted with the field of choral music, but have always considered my admiration for the Rossini "Stabat Mater" to be childish, and maybe it would work the other way around. Cretin: Enjoyed it all the way through; only difficulty is that I find no marginal pencillings indicating something I wanted to comment on. Agonbite of Inwit: "A Visit" struck me as very funny; I hope that's the way Doc meant it. Snark: "Zauberflöte" doesn't sound to me like what you say it is, and I've never seen it described just that way before. You're mixing up comprehension and association on page two, Doc; no one expects a poem to strike two people in the same manner, but it isn't fair for the poet to expect comprehension of others when he makes his references too hopelessly personalized. Blue Funk: Danner ought to sue whoever wrote that ad. Fan-Tods: Not much to be said about the purely VAPA aspects of this issue. Vanguard Boojum: I think back over the words spoken about reviews in previous VAPA mailings, and sigh with delight. Jim, I don't want to wish you bad luck or

anything like that, but I do hope that you lose that argument with Stanley about the clam and me. Temper: The remarks on cheap editions of books inspire me to remark that there is no reason whatsoever why books in this country should be so expensive. I recently ran across a statement by a Book Manufacturers Institute official which put the manufacturing cost per copy of a book which retails for \$5 at 70 cents, and the statement pointed out that this represents a 40 per cent increase in the last five years. Even this cost could be cut further by getting out of the habit of putting stiff bindings on books. They are relics from the middle ages when boards were needed as protection from constant use over a period of centuries—today, the average book is read once or twice, then stuffed away on a shelf and forgotten, unless it happens to be a textbook or destined for a circulating library. The authors and publishers would come out better in the end if they accepted a smaller margin of profit and royalties per copy, and got a bigger sale by selling books for less. The amount spent on promotion is positively scandalous, too. My guess is that a proper shaking-up of the whole publishing industry and selling system would make it possible to publish any new book for not more than \$1 per copy, in a format perhaps like the newsstand version of "The Black Rose". It has been done in France for years and years.

Man Sagt

Graph Waldeyer: In your Horizons in the paragraph titled Buck Rogers vs Ley, you express a thought that has often crossed my own mind. If you asked me for the answer to the question "Who is the better prophet, Rogers or Ley?", my answer would be Rogers. And mean it. And point to facts and figures to prove it. ' I have put it into a simple proposition: "An expert is a man who knows too much that isn't so." ' Now if scientists and experts would confine themselves to predicting what can be done, and quit trying to predict what can't be done, they would not be 100 per cent wrong so often. The Scientific American recently reprinted, with good grace, an article they published five or six years ago, titled, "Don't Worry—It Can't Happen". The article was about atomic fission and was accompanied by a diagram showing atomic structure, which explained lucidly why an atomic bomb could never be developed. ' Now as to whether there can ever be a defense against the atomic bomb—a direct defense—my mind is open. Perhaps there can never be a method of "smothering" or otherwise preventing an atomic bomb from going off. But the statements of the scientists that there can never be a defense do not sway my own opinions on the matter in the slightest. And that includes Einstein. ' If anything inclines a man to trust his own judgment first, it is the record of the Experts' prognostications on the length of World War Two—which ranged from 1942 to 1949, and the fact that at least a fourth of the experts wanted to win World War Two by fighting World War One over again, and another fourth wanted to win World War Two by fighting World War Three. (This latter group includes the hysteric Major Siversky, who wanted to scrap battleships and carriers. ' And having criticised the experts, I will now go out on a limb with some general observations about the future. First, it seems certain we shall never "get along" with Russia, but I am not prepared to say yet whether I think this means we must fight her. But I will predict this emphatically: There will be no "atomic Pearl Harbor" on the U. S. It is absurd to say that just because we are not an aggressor nation, we will wait for another nation to strike the first blow. We did this in the case of Japan, because we knew full well we could take the blow and still recover ~~and~~ ~~from~~ and win. We know that we might not be able to recover from an atomic sneak punch. That policy of letting an aggressor strike the first blow is overboard, as far as the people of the U. S. are concerned. As soon as we have reason to suspect some nation is intending to attack us without warning, we will, 1: Either force a showdown immediately, or, 2: Attack ourselves. And I think such a showdown will be forced by us long before any other nation has reached our own power to launch atomic war.

Recent Trends in Science Fiction

by

Thomas S. Gardner

IV. Planet Stories, the Saturday Evening Post of Science Fiction

Once there was a little acorn that sprouted and fought its way through the tangled forest. Eventually it began to push a way through the other trees, and get more of the sunlight. Then it ended up as a tree that stood out among the other trees. That, my friends, is the story of Planet Stories in a nutshell—or an acornshell.

When Planet Stories first came out, many of the fans and the general public considered it just another science fiction magazine. It did not appear with such a bang as Marvel Stories. You recall Marvel published one of the best science fiction novels ever written in its first issue, Burks' "Survival". Then issue by issue it dropped until it became extinct; but Planet has slowly improved issue by issue, until it now occupies a respectable place in the reading lists of fans and many of the general public.

Planet Stories has the rare distinction of publishing few super classics, and also very few real stinkers. The stories are average, good adventure.

Once upon a time it was rumored that Editor Campbell had an idea of making Astounding the Saturday Evening Post of science fiction. So he worked hard, and lo! and behold, he got into another bracket instead, the Atlantic Monthly type. As it occupies the sole place in the field, it can justly be proud, but it did not become the SEP of science fiction. Why?

Because Campbell's agile and trained brain would never have been satisfied with that position. Let us examine the SEP and see why. The magazine has a good circulation, we grant, also good general stories, good articles, few stinkers, and many stories that are later made into motion pictures. But the stories are everyday stories of life, struggle, adventure, in a world of people that accepts radar, television, mesquite, six-guns, women, saboteurs, love, and marriage as commonplace affairs. Nobody gets excited and the conflicts are those we see around us every day. But how does that apply to Planet and Astounding?

Well, Planet's stories are written to a big extent in which space travel, solar and stellar civilizations and exploration, fall and rise of civilizations, are the accepted mode, without anybody having unusual conflicts above the struggle to live, exist, and survive the environment. Sometimes the adventure is exciting; so is life and the SEP. But when we examine Astounding, we find that there is a terrific social, psychological, and political drive for new forms of expression in almost every story. Although Editor Campbell might not be willing or wish to admit it, Astounding attempts to be an educational force. Even the editorials are pungent and forceful. The editor, writers, and many of the readers of Astounding believe in the power of thought, work, science, and the future; while Planet takes them for granted, with all their failures and successes, the same as you take cream and sugar in your coffee, or take it black after some nights.

It is very evident that Planet supplements Astounding very well. Is that one reason why Planet appears to be increasing in popularity?

Planet has one of the best readers' sections in the science fiction field. This department is often better than Astounding's, especially since the vacuum inanity has crept into Brass Tacks, and after the discontinuance of the Science Discussions section. Thus Planet stands head and shoulders above the other magazines as to the readers' corner, with Famous Fantastic Mysteries coming next, and the Thrilling group and Ziff-Davis running far below. Many readers of Planet read the readers' section first! That has been checked with seven different readers. Five read it first!

The illustrations in Astounding are thoughtful and compelling. In Planet, they're just compelling, especially the girls on the cover who never look like

the ones in the stories—or seldom do, anyway.

Planet has had one serious weakness. Too many stories were forcefully laid off the earth. I am glad to see that their policy has relaxed somewhat, and some of the stories are now being laid on the earth. Any magazine that tries to hold a rigid location or policy for its authors will find it hurting them.

Eventually, Planet will probably become monthly. It should try to keep improving slowly, and thus make a firm place in the market. Peacock was to be congratulated on the good job which he did. However, I would like to see some of the Astounding rejects, such as those Astonishing and Super Science published, in Planet. In fact, this probably has been the case with a few stories. Astounding rejects may be just as good as Astounding's stories. Sometimes Editor Campbell and I don't agree on the quality of a story. But he always wins the argument, because I don't get to see it until it has been published in Astounding or elsewhere, and I happen to recognize and verify it as a reject.

The policies of Planet are on the whole forward-looking. I expect to read it for many years to come.

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Orpheus Gets Jet Propulsion

An advertisement in the July issue of "The Etude" not only reminded me of a Rube Goldberg contraption, but got me to thinking about what part science may play in the postwar musical world. G. Schirmer, Inc., a thoroughly sane and sensible music publishing firm until this advertisement, now offers for sale a contraption entitled the "Metronoma Electronic with the Flash Baton". The modest sum of \$16 will bring you "a post-war marvel of the music world, completely revolutionizing the old type metronome". It seems that there is a miniature lighthouse built into the metronome, whose little beam is synchronized to waver back and forward with the ticking of the metronome. The advertisement fails to explain just what purpose this serves; I gather, though, that maybe some pianists feel safer when they're really on the beam that they can see.

However, discussions of musical advances are usually limited to talk about harmonic innovations, use of a quarter-tone scale, and other aesthetic problems. It seems to me that science is apt to play a part too in the coming years.

For example, the new techniques in recording of sound should make possible the construction of "organs" which would make music indistinguishable from that of a full orchestra. They would require no more mechanism than the modern pipe organ, aside from the new feature of having incorporated the recorded sounds on all pitches of each orchestral instrument and group of instruments. A good organist should be able to counterfeit any of the orchestral music from Haydn through Wagner with results almost identical to those produced by a full orchestra. The things would be too expensive and cumbersome for the average home, but would prove very handy for broadcasting stations, community centers, and such places.

If wire recording or any of the other new recording systems developed during the war find their way to the popular market, it should be the beginning of the end for the big record companies. Before the war, it was possible to record your favorite music from the radio, but not practical—static and distortion, combined with the need for putting on a new recording disc every few minutes, made it a hopeless job. With new types of recorders which operate without interruption indefinitely, and the distortion-free frequency modulation transmission system, the home listener could easily and probably legally build up his home library of records without leaving his radio.

I don't look for any revolution in the art of manufacturing musical instruments comparable with that of the 19th century, but the symphony orchestra could be approved no end by adaptation of the electric guitar principle to the weaker sisters. The viola and cello players, sawing with all their might, are still inaudible in any loud passage wherein the wind and brass are being employed. Some amplification of the tone of a couple of cellos and a couple of violas, through electricity, would be easy, and

electricity, would be simple and might reveal new beauties in familiar scores. Stokowski has already made a half-hearted step in this direction, by utilizing several microphones to record the music of the orchestra, then "mixing" the result to what he believes are the best proportions. (Along much the same line, it should be easy by repeated re-recordings to duplicate the sound of the orchestra of Handel's day, and find out what it sounded like when the orchestra contained more than a dozen oboes.)

And has anyone ever experimented with the use of hypnosis as an aid to musical pedagogy? Learning to play the piano, for instance, is quite different from the study of Latin or mathematics. A person who has been studying for two or three months knows all that is needed to perform the most difficult music ever written; his trouble is the inability to apply those principles without many long years of daily practice. Stop me if I'm wrong, but a hypnotized person can do many things that he is unable to do while in a normal stage—feats of memory and muscular endurance, for example. What would happen if John Brown, a veteran of three months' piano study, were hypnotized, led to a piano and a Rachmaninoff concerto, and told to play it? Hypnotic suggestion might also be useful in eliminating faulty techniques in performance.

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El Dorado

The very suggestion that scientific advances might outstrip science fiction would have seemed absurd a few years ago. To me, it seems equally absurd today, yet some of our highest-tensioned thinkers are obviously thinking deep thoughts on the problem. I feel moved to attempt to say comforting things to ye men of little faith.

But before saying them, I ask whether the real problem hasn't ~~been~~ escaped attention. Specifically, is it possible that a lot of us have been reading stf. simply because we liked to speculate about conditions a few years hence, instead of the far broader and nobler reason—the recognition that there will always be newthings ahead? Probably the Campbell influence in Astounding's stories has a lot to do with this. Beginning with the Heinlein "history of the future", and culminating in the preponderance of stories that center around atomic power, Astounding has been a preparation grounds for a specific future, the one that has been the most probable and the most logically developed.

As for me, I'll never be content to sit back and relax with a sense of triumph, if I live to see the day when atomic power has been harnessed to peacetime uses, when travel to the planets has become a regular thing, when we all live to be 200 years of age, and when the superman has arrived. That reality will be no better intrinsically than the reality of 1933 was when I first picked up a stf. magazine, or than the reality of 1946 is as I type this. My attention will be focussed on the far-off things.

And don't let anyone convince you that there aren't plenty of those far-off things left, even if all the present-day experiments with atoms, rockets, transmutation, radar, youth serums, controlled mutations, and the like come to successful conclusions. The list that Speer wrote for Fantasy Commentator is logical enough, but it does not take into consideration one very important fact. It is the manner in which the possible becomes the impossible and the impossible becomes the possible within the space of a few decades, as science advances. Spontaneous generation of life has disappeared from the scene with advances of medical science, but its place has been filled by new knowledge of physics which forces us to accept the far more fantastic assumption that a thing becomes larger simply because it moves. A single great genius can open up new possibilities that even folklore and mythology have never hinted at.

I can see only one thing that might put an end to science fiction as we know it. That would be the establishment of communications with a far greater advanced civilization on another planet. It is theoretically possible that civ-

ilizations exist whose accomplishments are far beyond anything man can imagine.

Unless that happens, I'll string along with a man who didn't live at a time when much science fiction existed, but had its spirit to a greater degree than certain members of the present company. "A strange picture we make on our way to our chimeras, ceaselessly marching, grudging ourselves the time for rest; indefatigable, adventurous pioneers," Robert Louis Stevenson wrote in the essay from *Virginibus Puerisque* whose title I have borrowed. "It is true that we shall never reach the goal; it is even more than probable that there is no such place; and if we lived for centuries and were endowed with the powers of a god, we should find ourselves not much nearer what we wanted at the end. O toiling hands of mortals! O unwearied feet, travelling ye know not whither! Soon, soon, it seems to you, you must come forth on some conspicuous hilltop, and but a little way further, against the setting sun, descry the spires of El Dorado. Little do ye know your own blessedness; for to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to labour."

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Music for the Fan

The fabulous chaotic condition of the Warner Fanzine Files has finally carried off its triumph: I am totally unable to locate the FAPA mailing of five years ago. Unless another quest atticward succeeds before this issue of *Horizons* is totally stenciled, "When We Were Very Young" cannot be written this time. But it provides a good opportunity to bring back this department for a one-night stand, and get a lot of things off my chest about the songs of Hugo Wolf.

If anyone ever deserved those words of lamentation about unappreciated genius, it is Wolf who was not famous during his life, and whose reputation has failed to grow since his death among anyone except musicians themselves. The very name is unfamiliar to a lot of people who can whistle a dozen Stravinsky tunes and identify all the Rachmaninoff preludes. Much of the reason for this neglect can be traced to two causes: Wolf wrote nothing that took the whole civilized world by storm, and his important work is almost entirely confined to the art song. There is little or nothing that can find a place on piano recitals, only one important composition for strings, and certainly nothing in Wolf that holds a place comparable to the Brahms Lullaby, the Schubert Serenade, or Tchaikovsky's "None but the Lonely Heart".

There are even difficulties attached to the songs themselves. They are, to begin with, modern in every way, yet not so spectacularly so that they make the listener immediately aware of their novelty. (Wolf is often considered as more contemporaneous with Brahms and Wagner than he should be; his best work was done in the last years of the 19th century, only a very short time before the time of the most popular work of Strauss and Sibelius, for example. It is his early death that produced the illusion--he died in 1903, hardly more than 40.) The songs are hardly suitable for any place except the thoroughly serious recitals--Wolf "keeps up a terrible thinking" in almost all of them. And they are extremely difficult, both for the singer and accompanist. There probably isn't anything in the whole field of lieder that requires more brute strength on the pianist's part than Wolf's setting of Goethe's "Trunken Müssen Wir Alle Sein".

On the credit side is, first and foremost, the extreme beauty to be found in all of Wolf's important songs. He was wise enough to choose great poetry to set to music--more than 50 of the songs are to the poetry of the sadly neglected genius, Mörike, and another 50 to the works of Goethe. Wolf gets into the world of the poem in each song, in a fashion that not even Schubert or Brahms ever equalled. Listening to the songs, one gets the same curious vision of old woodcuts, or figures on ancient bronzes, that Nietzsche claimed "Parsifal" produces. Sometimes, this is produced by the very simplest of means. "Nun Wand're, Maria", for example, consists of a simple but inexorable progression in thirds in the accompaniment, against an ordinary dotted rhythm, to which the voice sings in a very restricted compass its simple story: it is the world of Bach's Passion Music

recreated. However, it mustn't be thought that the simplicity of means signifies any lack of resourcefulness and subtlety. Wolf almost never did things in the obvious manner, which probably accounts for the fact that none of his songs gained that all-out popularity. His harmonic skill is particularly noteworthy; it obtains its effects without going much beyond the harmonic universe of Brahms and Chopin, yet uncovers new worlds of beauty without the cloying chromatics of his French contemporaries or the destruction of the sense of tonality.

If anyone reading this is inspired to look into the situation, I advise starting out with some of the "Spanish Songs", most of which are thoroughly German in sound but set to translations of old Spanish lyrics. "Nun Wandre, Maria" which has already been mentioned is from this group. So is "Nun Bin Ich Dein", a demonstration of one of Wolf's characteristic methods of song construction—the development of a single tiny melodic fragment in the accompaniment throughout the entire course of the song. Most of the Goethe songs are thoroughly satisfactory—Wolf's setting of "So Lasst Mich Scheinen Bis Ich Werde" is the only occasion on which a great composer has caught the deeper significance of the character of Mignon. My own favorites, however, lie mostly among the Mörike songs. "Der Tambour", "Der Genesene an die Hoffnung", and "Neue Liebe" are good opening wedges for investigation of this bunch.

The difficulties involved in the piano accompaniments (which usually are like piano arrangements of orchestral scores) make it hard to get a true idea of the songs by playing the piano parts and at the same time cueing in the vocal line, something that can be accomplished rather easily in the lieder of most composers. However, there is a fairly decent number of Wolf songs available in recorded form, and they usually make up a substantial part of any pecital of art songs.

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On Dit

J. B. Priestley in "The Old Dark House": "It seems to me that life demands so much care to be lived at all decently that it's hardly worth living. I'm talking about life as we see it, civilisation as it's called, and not the life, say, of a Fiji Islander or a Zulu. With us the whole thing has got to be so careful, so ordered, has become so conscious, asks for so much planning and safeguarding, that we never arrive at any real enjoyment or ease, to say nothing of sheer rapture. We're like people walking on a tightrope and the only real pleasure we get is when we say to ourselves, 'Well, that bit's safely passed.' Do you see what I mean? If you decide to lean back and enjoy things, then you simply come a cropper and everything's smashed for you; but if you're careful to avoid the cropper, it takes so much out of you that you can't really enjoy life at all. And it's no use talking about the golden mean and compromise and so forth, because if you try to work on that principle, you only get bits of cropper, bits of anxiety and carefulness, bits of cropper again, a miserable alternation. If you let things go at all, disaster comes; if you don't, if you look after them, then you're simply working hard at it all the time. The trouble is that we can't trust life, and in order to keep going with it at all, we have to be for ever watching it and patching it up. Therefore the only sort of happiness we can get out of it is like the weird pleasure that some people get from making and altering and fiddling about with wireless sets. So long as we continually turn the discs and change coils, we can congratulate ourselves on the fact that the set's working, but that's all we can do. We can't sit back and listen to the music."

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Nomination for the disappointment of 1946: Walt Disney's new feature, "Make Mine Music". The pictures are so pretty, and the music is so terrible, except for the Benny Goodman quartet and The Martins and the Coys. It must be admitted that the sound men achieved a small miracle in making Nelson Riddle sound decent, however.

MORLEY, CHRISTOPHER
Thunder on the Left

New York: Penguin Books, Inc., March, 1946; 184 pp.; 18 cm.; 25c.

Further Information: This book, copyrighted by Morley in 1925, is numbered 582 in the Penguin Books reprint series.

Review: The title of this volume, and the blurb, lead the reader to expect a quite different type of novel. While the book does contain something of the advertised "heavy atmosphere of an impending summer storm matched by the human tensions within the house", it is considerably more than that. It is incomparably sensitive and poetic, a fantasy filled with half-magic. Although not so marked, the opening and closing of the book serve as prologue and epilogue, between which the main part of the story is sandwiched. Ten-year-old Martin has a birthday party. He and his friends speculate on what it must be like to be an adult. When the time comes to blow out the candles on his cake and make a wish, he wishes to be sent into the adult world, that he may spy them out and discover whether grownups really have a good time. Most of the rest of the book takes place at the seashore on a vacation weekend. The children who were at the party are there, as hostess and guests, now grownup. Into their midst, Martin appears, adult in body but a child in mind and experience. He strides into the middle of a number of upper middle class, thoroughly repressed adults, and his naive statements are taken for the latest fashions in bright repartee. Once or twice another strange figure appears on the scene—the boy-man's sister, Bunny, frantically attempting to call him back to full childhood, before he experiences too much. She eventually succeeds, when he finds a toy that had been given him at that long-ago party, just as the adult world suddenly crashes into unexpected tragedy. The brief final chapter returns Martin to his party, sobered by his experience, and conscious of the enormous gulf between the child and adult world. Very little happens in this story, until the crash that results in the break from the adult world. Morley instead devotes most of the rather brief novel to character building, and revelling in purple passages. He is particularly skilled in the *mot juste*, and inevitably succeeds in saying something novel when he mentions the animals around the house—the flies rest on the ceiling "after a hard day", and when the host makes love to another girl and pays no attention even to Martin, much less his wife, "the crickets shouted, rattled tiny feet of approval on the floor of the dunes like a gallery of young Shelleys." The entire romance between George, the host, and the girl sways perilously on a tightrope between the ludicrous and the poetic; the character of George, bogged down in the routine of life and business, is precisely what Thorne Smith tried so many times to catch in *Topper* and never quite succeeded. Martin's intrusion on this world is responsible for most of the novel's satire. The hostess promptly falls in love with him, and is quite unable to understand the fact that he takes, as a child, her love for him for granted. He quite shocks the gathering when he asks that one of the women put him to bed, and is considered highly original when he asks whether he must eat his beans. Morley also makes effective use of symbolism. The thunder dies down after the first day—the title comes from the Roman belief that thunder on the left indicated an omen of the gods. But the moonlight turns everything into a world of half-reality, abets George's romantic fancies. The bed in the guest room that insists on collapsing at the most awkward moments, the balustrade on the porch that is always threatening to collapse, the picnic which is planned and so important that Morley puts the p into upper case—all of them contribute in both a primary and a secondary way to the story. The element of fantasy in this volume is not too strong, but definitely throws it over the borderline onto the shelves of fantasy volumes. Its availability now at almost every newsstand in the cheap reprint edition is an opportunity that should not be missed.

—Harry Warner, Jr.

When We Were Very Young

The mystery of the missing mailing has been solved, through which I am reminded of a more serious one which I had almost forgotten. It turns out that this mailing of five years ago is the one which so mysteriously disappeared four or five months after its arrival here. (No, children, that was before Clod's arrival on the scene.) Behind-the-scenes conniving, when this mishap became apparent in early 1942, brought me copies of the publications that were still in the surplustock, and it is with these that I work at this time. You will look in vain, incidentally, for those further words on Korzybski in this issue of Horizons; this sort of thing will be more interesting than my half-baked comments on a subject I probably don't understand sufficiently anyway. "Horizons was appearing in the mailings by September of 1941. You couldn't read the hektographed contents, but I still think the covers by Marconette were the best hekto art work in fan history." Doc Lowndes had just issued the first sample of Agenbite of Inwit. "I'm going to be entirely brazen about it and state unreservedly," he stated unreservedly, "that my favorite science fiction and fantasy magazines this year have been Stirring Science Stories and Cosmic Science Fiction. It would be foolish indeed to try to pretend that the fact that one of my closest friends, Don Wollheim, is the editor has nothing to do with it; it has a great deal to do with it. Mainly because Don and I see just about as closely eye to eye on what's good and what ain't in stf and fantasy as it is possible for two distinct individuals to see." Elsewhere in the issue, RWL writes that "The science fiction of today, is no longer inspired or inspiring. It no longer looks forward to an inspiring tomorrow. It sees for the future only a more sickening dungheap than we have in the present. What science fiction needs most of all today is a dynamic, living, scientific optimism, one which dares to foresee and envision, a greater rather than a lesser tomorrow, a brave new world rather than a cringing attempt to hang on to some shards of the status quo." Joe Gilbert was publishing Sound Off!, which idea—like that of Vanguard Variorium and Vanguard Boojum—was an excellent one but failed to attract the EAPA's fancy. "Milty was worried because his draft number was coming up, so got his revenge by writing a four-page article to explain reasons for not writing an article about the superman. It's one of those things that must be included if we ever get around to publishing an EAPA anthology. (Which brings to mind the thought that such a publication next summer would be very welcome and a fine way of celebrating the completion of this organization's first ten years. Anyone second the motion?) Koenig had dug up some beautiful quotations for The Reader and Collector. Like the one from the second issue of The Southern Star: "We aren't promising anything special in the way of mimeographing, except that we'll do our dangest on it, and will doubtless have a fairly legible magazine by our first issue." Or from Sunspots: "There is very little we can say, that has not already been said, it is so, that we leave it to you, our readers, as you read this, to stop and give a moment of thought to a great fan." Why the first issue of En Garde is contained in this envelope is a puzzle, inasmuch as it's dated March, 1942. I wonder, did Al in the years that followed remember the opening exordium? "Regardless of anything appearing in this or future issues, we love all the fans! Let the fan who feels injured, or the subject of our attack rest assured. Whatever we may say in no manner changes our liking for that particular fan." "That unforgettable but forgotten person, R. Cornelius Jones, was with us once again through a single-sheeter. Most of it was about the late Russell Chauvenet. "I like Chauvenet. Let it be known. To me he has the most perfected, most lofty style of composition in all fandom. He is cultured; that is one thing that really impresses me of him. He is forever referring to Dante and other famous classical authors." After several more paragraphs of this, R. Cornelius declared that "Louis Russell Chauvenet is essentially a man of letters. He lives in such an atmosphere. That is why he is taking all fandom by the heart with his publication, Sazdonyx."