

Published and edited for FAPA by V.L.McCain

Man is not bred by living alone.

One of the most fascinating journalists on the current scene is William Bradford Huie. I first became conscious of this man in late 1950 when he purchased from Lawrence Spivak the long-floundering AMERICAN MERCURY with the intentions of completely revamping the magazine and turning it into a profitable operation. He accomplished the former but not the latter. He sustained it for several years by one of the most exotic methods of publication financing of which I've ever heard. He was paying the losses out of his own pocket by spending spare time writing commercial fiction and selling it to the high-paying slicks; the first time I ever heard of the big mass media magazines being forced to subsidize a less successful competitor. But the situation grew worse and about a year and a half ago the heavy money right wing forces behind Senator McCarthy, in a quite complicated series of maneuvers, moved in and forced Huie out. Since then the magazine has been hopelessly partisan and unreliable (it printed the article about communism among the clergy which forced the resignation of McCarthy's newly appointed chief of staff last summer, if you recall). However, while Huie was at the helm it was one of the most fascinating publications available. Huie went in for crusades so the magazine cannot be said to have been completely unbiased...but Huie himself cannot be termed either a liberal or a conservative, falling well between the two extremes, and I never caught him distorting the news, which is a statement I can make for very few columnists, commentators, editors, or publications.

Huie is certainly one of the most versatile of today's men of letters. While at the helm of the Mercury he fulfilled several other capacities besides that of editor. Each issue contained a lengthy column of political analysis which was always readable even though one might not agree with the views expressed; he occasionally delved into psychology and sociology in special pieces, showing himself an extremely sharp observer, and he was constantly coming up with special features dredged from his own personal experience. There was one, headlined on the cover in exposé fashion, titled "I was Bugsy Siegel's Butler", with Huie's byline. And it turned out he actually was! Only for a few weeks, and strictly as a plant....he was a newspaperman looking for a story. But even this is something out of "The Front Page" rather than the sort of thing a normal reporter does. Another time he recounted a wartime experience when he and a buddy accidentally stumbled across a detailed report of the Normandy invasion a couple of weeks before it occurred....and decided they couldn't possibly be authentic. There were others somewhat less sensational than these; and all this in addition to his bread-and-butter fiction for the slicks!

this is page two

But he isn't restricted to shallow fiction. He has written at least one serious novel, and while I've never heard Huie's name mentioned as one of our outstanding serious novelists, this novel struck me as being far above the average in its field. It wasn't the sort I particularly care for; it was one of that prevalent type which professes to stark realism, but insists on regarding the world as exclusively made up of very sordid individuals and situations, all constantly on the make for money and/or sex. But, as a representative of the type I found it very superior. Huie's observational abilities are not confined to sociology.

And just this month he has appeared in still another guise... as the author of a non-fiction book. The book has received reviews in practically all the top publications (In case you didn't know, around 75% of the books published each year don't get reviewed anywhere due to lack of space; or at least not in places like TIME, SATURDAY REVIEW, NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, etc.) It's titled "The Execution of Private Slovik" and, so far as I know, this is the first time hardcover and paper back publication have occurred simultaneously, except under the Ballantine imprint. This is a Signet book, available at 35¢ and I highly recommend it. I wish all books were issued this way. I find it impractical to purchase hardcover books but the reviews I read frequently intrigue me.... but while many of them see paperback appearance eventually, by the time they arrive I've forgotten about them or at least my interest has diminished. It was pleasant to be able to buy this one less than a week after the first review appeared.

In case you hadn't already heard of it it is a detailed examination of a unique case, the only American soldier to be executed for desertion in 90 years. To a person who has deplored both the system by which the military is run and the shirking of responsibility by individuals this example of a unique conflict between the two gives rise to a great deal of thought.

Without going into as great detail and length as Huie does I can't fully explain my own reactions (which is why I recommend you read it) but as Huie says each individual must judge for himself. The Army is clearly justified in some instances and at fault in others. The book is not an emotional attack upon the Army. As Huie points out Slovik is no longer on trial. The case against him has been proven and he was convicted. It is the individuals who carried out the execution who are now on trial. But, while he points out the lapses in logic which occur, Huie presents both sides fairly and presumes to make no judgment of his own in the book.... which is an attitude rather unique among historians, I believe. Most books of this sort I've previously read obviously represent certain conclusions on the part of the author and he uses all his skill to convince the reader. Huie leaves the decision up to you, and a rough decision it is.

There are no clearcut villains. One red cross representative in Detroit makes a brief appearance and leaves the reader grinding his teeth in rage (it is precisely the sort of thing which has.... probably unjustly.... given the Red Cross a bad name with so many people). But she actually plays no decisive part in Private Slovik's relations with the Army so she cannot be blamed. The military

throughout obviously were working from the noblest of motives, although it is a bit disquieting to think that a man's life might be at stake simply because of President Eisenhower's widely publicized disinclination to read anything lengthy.

There is one minor case of clear injustice; the Army refused to pay the widow the insurance which she was clearly entitled to due to atttechnicality. And there is one major case, in that apparently Private Slovik's previous criminal record was used to justify the execution. However, in essence, it would seem an injustice was done this individual; the crime of the Army against Private Slovik was not that they executed him for desertion...it is that he was the only one they executed for this crime. The reasons for executing Private Slovik were excellent. He was to serve as an example and a deterrent, and one was badly needed. But can there be any justification for singling out one individual to pay the supreme penalty for an act which has been committed by many? The basic law of our land proscribes cruel and unusual punishment. When only one individual is executed out of 49 who are sentenced to death, from among over two thousand who received courts martial this is certainly unusual punishment. And I defy anyone to read the account of the hopelessly inefficient execution and say it wasn't cruel. Clemency should not be denied when there is a reasonable basis for extending it but it is fantastic to claim this is the only deserter in the U.S. Army who had no extenuating circumstances.

Personally I would rather live and work under very strict rules or laws which are enforced 100% of the time than under milder ones which are enforced only when those in authority feel like bestirring themselves. If death was justified in Private Slovik's case (and it certainly seems to have been...in fact, it seems fairly clear that if the Army hadn't gone such a long period without any executions for this matter a large majority of the deserters, including Private Slovik himself, would never have taken the risk.) it was surely justified in at least a handful of other equally serious cases. In fairness both to Private Slovik and to the men who remained at their posts these should have been executed also... or if they were to be granted clemency it should have been granted to this man also. Singling out one individual to pay this extreme penalty is inexcusable. If remission was justified in the other cases it was justified in Private Slovik's. If it was not justified they should also have been executed.

As I said before I can't give sufficient details to justify my conclusions but I do think this is a book which every well-informed person should read. I consider it one of the most superb jobs of research and unbiased reporting I have ever encountered and believe it deserves one of those annual Pulitzer Prizes handed out in that category.

To Barnum a sucker must have been
The sort of touch he loved to skin.

1929 WAS A LONG TIME AGO

FIENDETTA--No argument with you about the Communist philosophy but I do take exception, somewhat, to that statement of yours that "(Russia turned) right around and (joined) our side when she saw we were going to win." A most peculiar method of joining she picked.....about like the football choosés to sail over the goalpost. Russia was a neutral (only more 'neutral' toward Germany than the allies) right up to the hour the German troops invaded her borders. The only reason Russia was on our side during the last war was that Hitler chose to fight both of us rather than taking on just one. And the Russians must have been possessed of considerable foresight to see the allies were going to win way back in mid-1941. At that time Germany occupied most of continental Europe and was treated with tender care by the few remaining neutrals, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, and Turkey. The U.S. was sitting fastidiously behind our ocean barriers, sniffing disdainfully at the rude European manners and playing an America First fiddle while attempting to ignore the conflagration singing the seat of our pants. England was Germany's sole remaining foe of any consequence and, after the war, the British government revealed they could not have withstood, had Germany launched an invasion in the winter of 1940-41. Everybody in Europe was betting on Hitler's ultimate victory whether or not he succeeded in actually conquering England. And throughout this the only power on the continent which could have challenged him, the Russian Bear, was carefully keeping his nose clean. And this 'smart move' of picking the winning side resulted in a more disastrous invasion of Russia than even Napoleon's. Are you perhaps getting this confused with Russia's declaring war on Japan several days after we dropped the A-bomb in order to cash in on the booty she'd been promised at Yalta? Actually, it's pretty generally conceded that the one thing which resulted most directly in Hitler's defeat was his invasion of Russia. If he had sensibly left them alone and the Japanese had refrained from attacking Pearl Harbor and both had treated our shipping with respect it is highly probable Hitler would still be riding strong. They probably could have worn down Britain by sheer attrition if nothing else, granted sufficient time. Japan could have had all Asia. Of course both Russia and the U.S. would eventually have been drawn in, in any case. Russia, a totalitarian nation, squeezed on both sides by the Japanese Asiatic empire and the German European one would probably have launched a defensive war, eventually, if not attacked first. But the Russians have immense patience. And once the Eastern hemisphere had been made safe for fascism (or at least totalitarianism) the next tempting prize would have been the rich, but poorly defended, continent of South America. I doubt if the Monroe doctrine would have been sufficient to spur us into taking on two such colossi as Japan and Germany would have been, under the circumstances, but with them in our back yard incidents would have eventually developed and we'd have been forced into a fight, without the help of either England or Russia, for Russia is not a natural ally of the West. Only a ridiculous action like Hitler's invasion before he'd finished

England and/or the U.S. could have forded such strange bedfellowship.////I've heard of three methods of doing away with the tv lines, and I must say the varied approaches to such apparently insoluble problems certainly insure my respect for human ingenuity. The first and simplest is a device called 'spot-wobble'. At any given moment there is only one dot of light on the screen. The purpose of this gadget is to make that spot constantly wobble back and forth vertically. Thus the lighted area is bled over into the unlighted portion between the lines which customarily remains blank. This enables the viewer to sit much closer to a large screen than is now possible. Naturally, the definition isn't improved any but it doesn't force a person to sit so far from the set (thus always seeing a 'small' picture, no matter what size the screen) and a much more attractive picture results. The one I read about was an experimental model and the writer who had viewed it was highly enthusiastic. But that was five years ago and I've never heard another word about it so presumably it proved impractical somehow along the line. The second is far more radical and would involve a complete overhaul of all stations and sets to transmit and receive it. This idea is called 'interlining' and would result in a far better picture. In each transmitter there would be duplicate scanning mechanisms and in each set duplicate circuits to receive them. They would be adjusted so that two very similar pictures are transmitted, but the lines from one picture would fit in between the lines of the other. I imagine they've found this a difficult technical feat unperfected as yet....my source is not authoritative so I can't say. The last named involves projection television and use of the present picture. I read about it in a non-technical periodical so the theory behind it was not given. However, the writer who had observed it said that in an Arthur Godfrey program they picked up, detail was not lost, as is usual when a picture is enlarged but was actually gained. That his individual freckles and the hairs on his head could be detected.

////
DAMN!--Ah, yes...."Sentimental Rhapsody", or "Street Scene", if you prefer. They've been trading those two titles back and forth for it for years now. I think this is probably the most effective piece of movie background music ever written....with the possibly exception of "Laura" and after that became first a smash hit, and later one of the more frequently played standards it lost much of its effectiveness as background music. I couldn't name them all for you but at least four movies (and I think five), if you count its use as the prelude to "How to Marry a Millionaire", have used this piece as their theme. I first encountered it in 1941 in a picture entitled "I Wake Up Screaming". This was a fairly good mystery suspense yarn, which carries an unusual number of distinctions considering its general quality level. Unless one counts her early work as an extra or bit player in some of the Astaire-Rogers films (and even here she was usually a chorus girl) this is, I believe, the only picture Betty Grable ever made in which she neither sang nor danced. No, come to think of it, she didn't do

this is page six

either in "Give Me a Sailor" a 1938 picture for Paramount, as far as I can recall although Martha Raye, the star (along with Bob Hope) did both. Martha Raye also won a contest for the possession of the most beautiful legs in that picture, also.....in which the producers didn't bother even having Grable enter. Such lack of foresight! So lets say it is the only picture in which Grable ever starred in which she had a completely dramatic role. Her costars were Victor Mature, Carole Landis, and Laird Cregar. (Technically he headed the supporting cast but since he walked off with the picture he deserves to be remembered as one of its stars.) And it was in this picture that both Cregar and Miss Landis turned in the finest performances of their respective careers. Since she is now the late Carole Landis and he is the even later Laird Cregar there is no opportunity for either to ever top themselves in this picture. The picture was remade this year under the title of "Vicki". I saw it but I wouldn't recommend it. Much poorer than the original. Perhaps Jeanne Crain and Elliot Reed were as effective in the two leading roles as were Grable and Mature but it lacked Cregar and Landis, and even more important lacked "Sentimental Rhapsody", the most effective thing in the whole picture. The music is marvelously evocative (to me at least) of deserted skyscrapers on a chilly fall evening. I thought Twentieth Century Fox had exclusive screen rights to the song (they've used it often enough) until just about a week ago when I saw a Dorsey Brothers musical short in which they used it as a dance background (under the 'Rhapsody' title). For some time I was convinced that this was also used as the theme music for the stage musical adaptation of Elmer Rice's "Street Scene". I'm now a trifle doubtful about this as Kurt Weill wrote the music for that play while Newman composed this piece. Perhaps I jumped to conclusions because the big push back of the song under the "Street Scene" title came in 1947, the same year the opera version of the Rice play appeared on Broadway. But I still seem to recall hearing it used as bridge music in the album from the play. It was a year later, in 1948, that they made the big attempt to turn it into a pop hit. By this time it was back under the title of "Sentimental Rhapsody". Several dance versions appeared. I have one. Les Brown's, I believe. I haven't listened to it in years. The music isn't too effective in dance tempo, and anyway for perfect effect you have to be in a darkened theatre listening to it.

HALF BAKED ARTICLES--You overlooked the stfnal derivation of "Roll Me Over" (which obviously derives from the impressive sensations which occur when a spaceship must reverse its position halfway between Earth and the Moon). Or don't you consider that folk music? I now see what you mean when you told Nancy Share FAPA was constructed solely of serious and constructive efforts. Quite so. This is easily the sort of thing one might submit as a thesis toward gaining a doctorate in any University.

HORIZONS--Got out of the habit of using correction fluid when I used film stencils. Very inconvenient to try to get in so I'd try to remember and use the correction fluid after I had it out of the typ-

ewriter, but I tended to overlook some of the x'd out portions or forget entirely. However, I notice a preponderance of such things in the latest BIRDSMITH so I'm trying to catch them as they happen this time, although you'll still find frequent strikeover. But as you know I do not belong to the Speer-Boggs school of perfectionism,...not where mimeography is concerned, anyway.//////I can't say it's too surprising if you're still ignorant of a story accepted by SPACEWAY months ago, if Ackerman is as dilatory in answering his selling clients as he is with the amateurs. No, I'm not speaking from personal experience but I had some friends who tried working with him. And there undoubtedly is no check to share, as the story has yet to appear, (although FANTASY TIMES carried another mention of it after my comment) and according to reports that magazine pays their writers sometime after publication, if at all. It's not only a glorified fanzine in contents, it appears to be in its attitude toward business also.//////What's wrong with the spelling of 'employee'? I always thought it was the preferred of two correct spellings.

IT CAME FROM BOX 203--I think this is probably the most difficult to read magazine I've ever seen in FAPA, which is a pity since the few portions I was able to scan before my resentful eyes started giving me headaches were quite interesting. My eyes have been giving me trouble anyway and the combination of dim ink, poorly aligned keys and the too distracting (altho they were unique in being well mimeod)cluttered margins proved just too much. And to pile on tortures you resorted to that most detested of all fannish vices, continuing lines of text horizontally past an illustration. Nothing is more annoying in the entire list of fannish crimes against intelligent layout.//////I picked up that Blanchard show only due to a frak reception one night. The station faded out again after about an hour, and anyway I was five or six hundred miles closer to San Francisco then.//////Oh, sure I know sub rosa recordings are available on an individual basis. As a matter of fact, just yesterday I received in the mail a 12" LP taken from a Benny Goodman Carnegie Hall Concert which he held one year later than the one which was made into a runaway best seller when it was dug up a few years back. There are a few slight drawbacks to the record. It is priced about 30% higher than if sold commercially (this company's product averages about twice as expensive on most of their records, however), the recording appears to be merely an acetate rather than a pressing, and if so it cannot be played very long before it will wear out, and the technical side of the recording is fantastically bad. Balance is fully as bad as on the Woody Herman concert MGM released, without a professional engineer having toned down the worse spots. On some of the selections the distortion is so bad as to prove unlistenable. But some are quite good. The arrangement of "One O'Clock Jump" is the most attractive I've ever heard (even if the recording does detract) and there is a version of "Flying Home" which

this is page eight

not only sounds like a regular commercial record but for my money is superior to the one the Sextet issued on Columbia. It features the greatest jazz guitarist of all time, of course, the late Charlie Christian (he'd joined Goodman only about two weeks before this concert). This same company has an almost limitless (well let's say it is limitless since what they have available is about five times as much as my entire collection) supply of similar records I could purchase and in most cases, since they were taken from radio broadcasts, the balance if not the physical recording, would be better and therefore the records would be more listenable. \$6.50 may sound like a rather high price to pay for two well performed but mediocorely recorded selections with a couple other fair ones thrown in plus some junk but as an addition to an all-out collection I figure it's worth it. I've paid equally high sums, individually, for old 78's.....only to have them reissued later on LP, something that is unlikely in most of these cases. In fact, I'd give four or five dollars just for that recording of "Flying Home" alone. However, I hope to convert them, when they're acetates, (there are some vinyl pressings available on the more popular sets but they're also more expensive) onto tape when I get a tape recorder. I can tone down some of the worse spots fairly easily with just the knowledge I have now and I hope to be able to pick up some tips on how professional engineers convert hopelessly bad recordings (which are good musically) into listenable, if lo-fi, recordings. I'd think most of these tricks would be workable by the amateur. And, of course, if I get a really good phonograph a percentage of the distortion will disappear automatically. Surprising the wonders good equipment will do for bad recordings. Big advantage of course is that there is no needle to wear out the grooves if you wish to listen to the music frequently, on tape. Anyone know how to reconvert that thin scratching blur made by loud brass when recorded by home equipment back into music again? Fooling with my tape recorder I learned how to avoid that effect in the first place but I'm afraid I don't know how to remedy it after it has been committed to wax. At any rate I'll doubtless to leaven my purchase of commercial recordings with the product of this company. As long as they stick primarily to acetates I doubt if the big companies will trouble to force them out of business, especially as they sell exclusively by mail. However, (I seem to have strayed from the subject a bit) I was primarily interested in introducing the apa spirit into this sort of exchange of performances.///Anyway, I'm glad to learn there is at least one other individual in FAPA who doesn't run shrieking at the first note of jazz. I'd thot since Laney left us I was left along among a pack of Bunk from Thelonius and care less.

MOREEN MUMBLINGS--I question whether any sensible man allows a lust for power to drive him into the extreme jeopardy which most Communist leaders constantly live in. I don't know the exact figures but the percentage of sudden death among top leaders in Moscow is quite high and many who are not executed or 'die' at diplomatic times are either retired in disgrace or kicked downstairs ditto. I maintain in a setup like that sensible men avoid

leadership. To court power against those odds is the hallmark of a very unstable if not actually unbalanced individual.///I don't particularly dislike Gershwin and Grofe. Their music is quite attractive on first hearing and I am grateful for it as having helped serve as my bridge into the field of serious music. But I simply found that after I began to appreciate composers like Bach, Mozart, Vivaldi, Ravel, etc. that Gershwin and Grofe suffered in comparison and the music seemed rather shallow in comparison, especially on continued and repeated listenings. Originally my plan for buying music by composers made no allowance from dropping anyone once I'd started purchasing them. But when it came time to buy Gershwin and Grofe again I found myself reluctant to spend money on their records when it could go for some other composer who stood up better under repeated usage. So I quit buying Gershwin and Grofe. The one Gershwin composition I still find quite listenable is the Piano Concerto in F, which has much more depth than the better known works such as the Rhapsody in Blue and American in Paris. I'm not familiar with The Mississippi Suite but I automatically dislike anything recorded by Kostelanetz.

PAMILREY--Wish I had that issue of BIRDSMITH. I'd like to reread my comments about the H-bomb to see what horrified you so. As I recall all I said was that I had refused to go into a panic over a possible A-war (would it have done any good if I had?) and felt the consequences were overestimated. Perhaps I'm not justified in speaking since I am not the father of a little girl but I fail to see that the A-bomb is morally any worse, for killing thousands simultaneously than was systematic bombing of Berlin with block-busters which did the same job piece-meal fashion. And Russian conquest of the world is far more than just 'the introduction of a political system (I) disagree with'. It is a reversion to the philosophy of slavery and the advent of a new philosophy which denies man the basic dignities which even the cruellest tyrants of the past lacked the ability to do away with. Let's make it clear....I dislike both socialism and communism intensely and I would do my own small best to prevent either from becoming the form of government in this country. But I do not advocate launching a preventive war against such occurrence as long as they are voted in in legal free elections (which of course Communism never would be in this country....if my recollection is not incorrect Communism, as such -- as distinguished from certain communist puppet parties in recently freed states such as British Guiana -- has yet to win its first free national election anywhere. It has always been imposed by troops). I would accept it and even live under it providing there was no more desirable country to emigrate to. However, I'm afraid I can't see this view that war is the greatest possible horror known to mankind. The pain would be intense but it would be over quickly, and if I had a daughter I think I would rather see her burned alive than to live a life as a slave in a country conquered by a force which would not even allow her the privilege of a free unfettered mind. Here is where your true lack of imagination comes in. You can talk all you like about the horrors of war, and horrible they are, but as long as there are forces such as Fascism or Communism loose in the world they become the lesser of two horrors.

this is page ten

I know there are people (in FAPA even) who lump together all forms of socialism under the heading 'Communism', but I am not one of them. As undesirable as I may regard it, I would certainly never advocate a war to avoid the type Socialism imposed on Britain by the Labor party, for instance. But there was one difference of considerable importance. Clem Attlee wasn't out to conquer the world. I would prefer an A-bomb war to knuckling under to the communists, certainly but it is the fate of Cardinal Mindszenty and the brainwashing undergone by American soldiers in Korea that prompts it, not doubts about the wisdom of government ownership of property. If your questions mean what they seem to you are saying the equivalent of the statement that England should have surrendered to the Hitler of Dauchau and Belsen in 1941 rather than take the risks of dying or being maimed, themselves or their families. Do you actually take this 'peace at any price' philosophy? It doesn't take two to make a fight, you know. One sufficiently determined and aggressive individual can do it...or at least produce all the same results. Do you actually believe those who forced King John to sign the Magna Charta and their successors who wrang similar concessions from later kings were dangerously irresponsible for the risks they were running both for themselves and their families if they failed? Or do you consider the iron maiden and the rack more merciful and desirable than the H-bomb?

PULL NO PUNCHES-- I believe the current dictatorship of Portugal did start out as a benevolent dictatorship some 25 or 30 years ago and is still regarded as probably the best-run and most benevolent of such governments currently in existence but it has through the years started many coercive practices we would find objectionable.////If I'm not mistaken on my picture titles (I haven't seen it) the heroine of "Miss Pilgrim's Progress" should have had an authentic accent because if she's the one I'm thinking of (Yvonne Donlan, or some such outlandish name) she is an American who went over there several years ago playing the Judy Holliday role in a company of "Born Yesterday" and stayed on to become the toast of Britain as just 'too, too, typically an American'. Since she's a big star over there and no one ever heard of her here she's stayed on and any choice American heroines she gets to play. I saw her a few years ago playing Doug Fairbanks wife in a picture called "Mr. Drake's Duck", I believe, which you could call stfish if you wish since it was all about a duck that lays an atomic egg.....honest. Actually it wasn't stfish at all. The atomic egg was just an excuse. The real purpose was to kid the pants off British official red tape and bureaucracy, which they did marvelously, 100 times more effectively than the overpraised effort in that direction by "The Day the Earth Stood Still". ///But it is important to know how old a car is unless you never have any intention of reselling it.///

this is page eleven

All the low-cost offset house seem to do your binding as well as printing and since they want the copy all prepared for photography of multiple pages at one time it would have made things rather complicated to try to have only part of the mag offset. As for mimeography.....the printed pages were half-letter-size.....a bastard size I'll never again try to fool with in mimeography. And since the already printed items were scattered through the magazine indiscriminately I couldn't have used your center-stapled mimeography of that size even if i'd owned a center stapler.//// I believe Coslet used to actually review the mailing before it was mailed out, if not before he received it, when he was o.e.

RABBLING F.P.--very nicely done. Rather clever idea, too.

SKYHOOK--Your "A Page from a Bucolic" (shouldn't that be 'the Bucolic?) very evocative. Apparently you've gotten jealous of those jobs Hoffman has been doing recently and decided to try * your own hand. How how about getting busy and actually writing the book?///Bloch brilliant, as when isn't he.///At one time I had a dissection of this issue's Atheling column precisely such as he gave the Zirul story, but I gave it up for about half a dozen reasons I shan't go into here. However this does seem about the most vulnerable to criticism column Atheling has yet written. And I wonder if all the anti-Campbell fulminating doesn't stem from a strong subconscious resentment that none of Mr. Atheling's stories have ever been purchased by J.SF.///My statement that it was Campbell who made science-fiction irrevocably a branch of fiction, not of science was based on what I considered an obvious interpretation of the oft-repeated history of sf. True, Tremayne pioneered, but it was under Campbell's stewardship that good writing, strong characterization, and forceful storytelling (as best exemplified by Heinlein) were first introduced into science-fiction in any serious quantity; it was under his regis that the rather unscientific science of psychology and the wholly unscientific one of philosophy became the two most important plot movers in sf;....or at least in the better sf; it was Campbell who pointed sf in a whole new direction, at right angles to the Gernsback 'science-fiction as scientific education' theory. That the field, which followed Campbell's lead, may now have gone astray in overemphasizing the new methods he introduced into sf to suit the taste of the J.W. Campbell who wrote old-time stories in the days when sf still had a capital S and a small f does not alter his responsibility as prime mover. Nor are frantic scrambling efforts by Campbell back to the dull characterless sf of the days when the science was supposedly accurate apt to turn the tide. Few men have the chance twice in one lifetime to decisively affect a whole field. And the J.W.C. of today is not nearly so important as the J.W.C. of 1939~~940~~. ///You are probably right that my opposition to social legislation as is Atheling's stand against the more modern sf but there is

this is page twelve

always the possibility that our further defense of the principles we hold might have some effect, which is probably the reason both Atheling and I continue flogging our dead hobby-horses.

TARGET: F.P.A.--The depression crippled our economy. Perhaps not as seriously as an atomic war. And there were many changes in our life. But not too awfully serious ones. We still live in the same type country with much the same traditions we had fifty years ago. Vast changes, sure, but not the sort of thing the old atomic doom stories always predicted with 90% of the country uninhabitable, all the children mutants and people reverting to savagery.

THIS BUSINESS OF HORSES--could have been a really elegant pastiche of Damon Runyon if you'd only studied the Runyon style more thoroughly. For instance the one thing that makes Runyon's style most strongly and makes him or his imitators recognizable at a glance is that he always uses verbs in the present tense. (Well, one Runyon authority says as how there was one lone little verb once in a Runyon story that was past tense but I never found it.) But you switch back and forth from present to past tense all through the story which makes it more irritating than otherwise, since this is too obviously a Runyon imitation to stand on its own, and not being quite authentic enough to be a good copy it is neither fish nor fowl.

VIEWPOINTS--That's an extraordinarily fine cover, Rosco, altho I didn't spot the significance the first time I looked at it. Clever and well-done, both. In fact if that is a linoblock you carved yourself, as it appears to be, you did a supernaturally fine job. And the cover is tastefully arranged and printed apart from the subject matter. Sorry I can't praise the rest of the magazine similarly. Your article is readable and while I would disagree with it that is beside the point. But whatever inspired you to try to illustrate an article on pro art with a bunch of left-over engravings and linoblocks of amateur work! You know from my experience that it fairly easy to get permission from the pro-mags to reproduce their old illustrations. And engravings aren't that expensive. You could have supplied valuable and pointed documentation for your article thereby and at the same time dressed up your magazine in a way impossible with unfamiliar amateur artwork. The result could have been one of those F.P.A.* zines people treasure for years. Just noticed the comment about having had to substitute linoblocks for engravings because of expense but I suspect, even so, you still weren't planning on using pro stuff were you? Well, it's still a nice cover. Too bad you didn't circulate it without any contents.

Fandom is a way of strife.
