

or Doc's Ditherings

THE BOOK I have often dreamed of this volume. It is not outstandingly different in outer appearance; the binding may be more tasteful and enduring than some; the print may be more legible and artistic than many, but that is rather beside the point.

It is the text of the book that fascinates me. It is fiction, simply yet beautifully done; it is at once realism and fantasy, for it deals with life as we know it. As with that life, the book begins nowhere, and, most probably ends at the same place. Some of the characters are under-developed; some are overdone. The book is at once witty, dull, beautiful, ugly, alluring, revolting, spiritual, and obscene. The language, or rather style, is not the same throughout. True, much of it is in English, but in many places where French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, etc, are more expressive, then these languages are used. Strangely enough, when I read the book, these are all understandable.

And some of the story is in pictures and in music. I cannot read music, but that does not matter when I find the book, because the symbols become sounds in my mind, and I can feel the melodies that are inscribed on the page as perfectly as if they were being played at the moment. There is poetry, prose, and the dramatic form as well.

Whether it is the greatest book ever to be conceived, the worst, or neither distinguishably 1 or the other, I know not. Who wrote it; how and why a book like this was written is likewise unknown to me. Nor can I tell how it ends.

But I often dream of this volume, and I hope to finish reading it before I stop dreaming for keeps.

THE IVORY TOWER Fond memories include yr scribe's attempts to satisfy the weird culinary demands of such people as the DAW (who hates butter, cheese, fresh vegetables, and so on); Chet Cohen, who also froths at the mouth at the thought of cheese, salt butter, and various other common edibles; Cyril, who cannot endure whole wheat bread or a ny such life-staff material; Johnny, who would pick here, and there, but more often decide to try a Chinese eat-erie, and Wilson, who burst into tears if we tried to put parsnips, carrots, etc on his plato. Only the cockroaches and ye scribehimself were satisfied.

There are also recollections of hav- ing personally trimmed the edges of a complete set of untrimmed Astoundings, Amazings, etc. (we refer to the issues which came out that way for general distribu- tion). Also several thousand fans who burst in at all hours of daylight or dar ness to type stencils, run off portions of magazines (said magazines never appear ed in full to our knowledge), mooch from our la r der, borrow, misplace, or damage our books and maga- zines, and help collect and to make vanish various and sundry eatables and wines.

We recall that, upon our arrival, we most optimistically made plans for the issuance of our pet "Strange" (dummy for which's been kicking hithe r and yon since 1938) as well as the projected "Flame- Wings" which we described in letters to Speer, Dale Hart, and Hollheim-Michel. Plus a little volume of farmag weirdtales and poetry. Plus a recapitulatio n in full of the farcus "War on Satellite X". Plus in- numerable "Les Vombiteurs". Well, a few of the latter did come out; matter of fact, all leventy copies of same we dummed at Springdale & CCC. (Some of those may be mailed almost any year now; there's two undis- tributed.)

So it goes. So, here we are at god (that should have been good; sorry) old Prime Base.

We still plan to issue fan maga!

QUOTES QUOTABLE "The postboys tell us that yonder is Montbard, a place utterly unknown to me. Nevertheless, I am not afraid to affirm, by analogy, that the people living therein resemble ourselves, are egotistic cowards, perfidious gluttons, dissolute. Otherwise they could not be human beings and descendants of Adam, at once miserable and venerable, and in whom all our instincts, down to the most ignoble, have their august origin. The only possible matter with younger people, is to know if they are more inclined to food or procreation. . . . These hideous creatures who are born only to devour or 2 embrace furiously, one the other, live together under the sway of laws which precisely interdict their satisfying that double and fundamental concupiscence; ingenious animals, having become citizens, voluntarily impose upon themselves all sorts of privations; do they not respect the property of neighbors? It is prodigious, if you take their avaricious nature into consideration; do they not observe the rules of modesty? It is an enormous hypocrisy, but generally consists of seldom speaking of that which they think without ceasing. . . . Laws are said to be necessary in the conformity of things; but we have become aware that conformity is contradictory to nature, and far from being necessary." M. Jerome Coignard in "The Queen Pédauque", by Anatole France.

"Those eateth a mouthful of water-melon, God writeth for him a thousand good works, and cancelleth a thousand evil works, and raiseth him a thousand degrees; for it came from Paradise." and

"Then I was taken up into heaven, some of my sweat fell upon the earth, and from it sprang the rose; and whoever would smell my scent, let him smell the rose." and

"He who has two cakes of bread, let him dispose of one of them for some flowers of narcissus; for bread is the food of the body, and narcissus is the food of the soul." - - Muhammed

WHATNOT ~~One~~ could start a series of memoirs here, but I'd rather not: at the rate of installment-frequency and space limit, it would get nowhere in five years at least. Pay little or no attention to the margins on the page. Or, I could pick up Speer's "Ramblings" and rebut that sterling feature: "List of Lies, Misstatements, and Half-Truths Published in Le Vombiteur During its None too Brief Existence." Pointing out that most of what Speer claims to have been lies or half-truths are just his own opinions in the matter and hardly fact. But, is it worth the trouble, I ask myself? And the answer is a hearty: no; let the little man have his fun. Le Vombiteur had its faults; none know that so well as I, who was its publisher. It spread a number of things which were incorrect; I was unaware of their inaccuracy at the time. It also published a number of items which approached accuracy but were not as near to fact as I prefer to be. In some cases, these might have been remedied. Sheer laziness, or, at times, malice toward some, was responsible for their not having been made. I bear malice toward damned few, but the exceptions make life interesting. And, finally, Le Vombiteur published a great many items upon which Speer disagrees; which are not substantiated by the dictionaries, encyclopedias, etc which he frequents, and from the basis of which he judges. Excuse me, fellow fans, but I cannot wax apologetic or sorrowful about that. However, I trust that some will uphold me when I opine that Speer is not exactly being on the level when he spends long moments searching for debatable issues in Le Vombiteur - - a rag which never did any person real harm - - and completely passes by the long record of mendacity, malice, hypocrisy, and double-dealing sustained by Fantasy News and those publishing it. To put it tritely: Speer strains at gnats but swallows camels without a murmur or protest. And if the camel is particularly offensive; if it is vile enough, he will condescend to defend it, from the attacks of those upon whom it has vomited.