

## August 1957

riends, I'm not sure at all that you'll get this August issue, but I'm pretty sure that, if you get it, it'll be late, because my calendar shows to-day the number 29 and we, like you, are in July. That gives me two days to write, cut the stencils and beg Martine to run the zine. Not enough, indeed.

After all, I was yesterday decided not to pub an issue for this month, due to several reasons, the least of these being that I'm a lazy man, always ready to do nothing when I have something to do. And I have something to do, beside answering a lot of your letters, gentlefen, which is not work but pleasure. But, anyway and nevertheless, that takes times, too. You must always be aware of this, that I'm no Englishman, no American, and that writing in my bad English takes something of two or three more time than writing in convenient French. That is why.

And the Linards who come thursday!
That alone takes already all of my mind and
I can scarcely think of something else.

So, you'll be kind enough as to consider this Flaccid Flail Emending Number Four as a vacation issue, save if, writing, I find something worth printing or discussing on a world-wide scale. Because you must know by now that my ffms are really not worth printing, save for the quotes which enlight'em. See, a cruel alternative was in front of me, grinning like an idiot: either not to put an issue forth, or to publish at all cost as to keep my monthly schedule. I choose the second point, as you see, maybe I'm wrong, but there is always the possibility that my precious mind falls upon a subject, wonderful or not, but which may please

or interest you fen. This zine is always an improvisation, I never think before sitting at my desk and I prefer to let my mind wandering and wondering since it discovers its path. If you think I'm too much expecting, from your kindness, let me know, please, and I'll seek another way. But don't expect too much, from MY kindness.

And here ends the beginning. I'm again Pierre Versins, rambling at Primerose 38, LAUSANNE, Switzerland, and assuring you, my readers, that I like you and your productions, letters, zines, cards or gifts.

Just come to think that I don't usually have my proper allowance of egoboo. I then must print here some opinions about myself and my seriousness and my famous zine, as to push yourselves to give me more in the future. You see, fen, when they find that someone likes something, men nearly always seek deeply as to discover if they don't TOO like this something. That is just the meaning of advertisements. So, Archie, please, show us what you can do. It's Archie MERCER who speaks:

ther things as well, but I don't have anything PARTICULAR in mind I seem to want to say about any of it ("it" was ffm ending number three), except that ffm ending DESERVES more to be said about it than the above, wether it is said or not.

Mercatorially as ever.

Oh, Archie!.. Arch

And Joe SANDERS who writes no less than: You Swiss have really beautiful postage stamps. They are much nicer looking than the American commemorative.

Js it not kind of Him?

Th, that egoboo, blast it, I am blushing :..

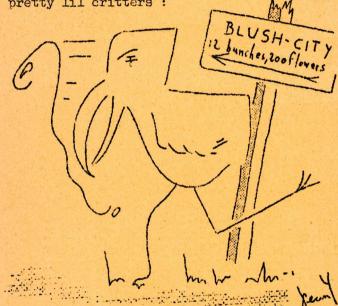
But I have in my unworthy hands something far more interesting than my high qualities. It is a big long grand letter of no consequence, from Jean YOUNG (God bless her).

Uou send me more egoboo, says she,

more compliments, more verbal flowers (and by now, Jean, you have pictural flowers too) than I can scarcely stand all at once. I had to read your letter aloud (why, good heavens, is it because you had to translate my English into English?) to Andy & Larry, and could hardly do it for blushing so.

Alas, my poor Lady, you blushing too? Anyway, that is well deserved. Why should I go alone in this world of ours, blushing and blushing all alone? There, don't cry, we'll go together blushing as long as we have blood in our perty arteries. Do you accept me as a blushing partner, Jean, do you?..

hen, see right here how we are pretty lil critters:



We are together rushin' to Blushingland.

And you?

Jomething more, she wrote a bit of her letter in French. Beware, Fapans, maybe American Fandom is just a French Fandomenum. But I'll save this precious French for a special issue of ffm, all in my aboriginal idiom. When I say "beware", it is not enough warning, methinks.

Do I then live in a world of shadowy things? she adds. A world of dreams?

Perhaps. There are nightmares there, too, sometimes ... but then there are things like moving, and changing Susan's diapers, and even cooking, and perhaps washing the dishes and making the beds - these are not shadowy ... except sometimes washing dishes can be shadowy.

Heavens! That must be why I like washing dishes. And Martine who thought that it was just that I wanted to help her. She will be disappointed ...

Now, ah now comes a paragraph which I want to quote without putting my idiotic reemarks in, a paragraph which I have been reading and rereading every day since I got Jean's letter.

Here you have it, perfect in itself and, now, I think I was right in pubing this ish:

like to go to shadowy places museums, especially. There is only two short blocks from us the Busch-Reisinger Museum of Germanic Art, which has all sorts of things - large plaster reproductions of statues and the insides of churches; these are large and cool and dim, and very echo-y. Susan likes to shout in there to hear her voice so very loud. But they have also smaller galleries, and usually they have modern pairtings there. These are quiet and full of sunshine, these rooms. And there is a garden - I never knew it till this spring, very late, because they always kept the door shut. There is a pool in the garden, and there are six goldfish in the pool; and the water for it comes spouting out of a lion's head (mouth) at one end. And there are statues in the garden angels and people, and a boy kneeling and pouring non-existent water from a goatskin, on the edge of the pool. Susan loves the boy; she climbs up on the rim of the pool and hugs him, and plays with his nose. Someday she and the boy are going to fall into the pool together, and perhaps I will baptize them both in the name of Pan.

od! I don't know if you love this as I love it. I just can't say exactly why, but I think the Linards will understand me. I hope only Jean will go on keeping this kind of existence. That ain't flowers, Jean, just bunches, from me to you.

After all, Jean, am I alone to think you deserve flowers? And if it is too much for your shyness to stand, let us put it this way: don't all gentle ladies deserve flowers, bunches and bunches of'em? There you are bound! Haha ...

But listen. When I said something might as well come from elsewhere as to help me to go forth with my ffm, I was not wrong. Here comes good ole John CHAMPION, and before all he says, as to give me an opportunity to connect what I said with what he has to say:

hy not ask Jean Young to translate her story herself? She seems to be pretty expert at French.

this? Shame upon me because I didn't find it myself.

is fibbing. Or M. Ron Ellique, if it would help. My Id tells me so. He says HE is the first French fan, bar none. And this is only logical; for was not the subconscious (or id) discovered by Dr. Freud, who was Austrian? Was not this around the early part of this century? And is not Austria as a



country close to France? From Austria it is but a hop to Schweizer-Reich and from there to France. My id also says that another reason can be found easily by observing the return address on letters, for is not Champion a genuine French name? Am I not in part French? And proud of it? Of course, people like M'sieu Ellique would no doubt bring up the fact that my Id has never been observed in French fandom. But my dear sir, of course. My Id is only an immaterial mental manifestation. He is not easily observed by other people than myself. And of course there is no trace of him in early French fandom, for he was really a true fake-fan to end all fake-fans. This was very easy at the time, to be a fake-fan, since there were NO other French fans. So you see, the truth is out. Nothing else will do. Print this if you darre.

of I dare print this, John? I'm not mad enough. What do you think I should become in Ron Ellik's hands? Something of a pie, I think. Nononono, I'm indeed full of intrepidity, but not foolhardy, not foolhardy, my dear sir. Print it yourself.

Then I'm still with you, John, may I thank you for your answers about Fitz-James O'BRIEN (not enough, alas, I want more about him, though I didn't know the English title for THE WONDERSMITH) and about French SF novels translated into English. There I must emend something. John writes:

Mr. Miller had asked for a list of great s-f and F. Bordes of Seine, France, sent a letter with a list of French stf. He mentions the following: by J.H. Rosny aîné, NELL HORN, LA VAGUE ROUGE, LA GUERRE DU FEU, and LE FELIN GEANT. I think these are all stf tho I'm not sure.

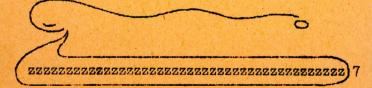
Well, hmmm, er ... if THIS is the kind of idea you Americans have of French sf, I'm not sure you'd not be strongly disappointed. I know Francis Bordes, he is a fair specialist on Rosny Aîne and he just can't have made such mistakes as to give Mr. Miller those above titles as sf. You see, LA VAGUE ROUGE is a book about revolutionists, LA GUERRE DU FEU and LF FELIN JEANT are both pre-historical novels like A STORY OF THE STONE AGE, by Wells, though infinite-

ly better. As for NELL HORN, it is nothing else than a novel about Salvation Army !!!!!

As for the other books, good. John goes on: Other books, also by Rosny Afné, I think (yes): LES XIPEHUZ, LA MORT DE LA TERRE, LA FORCE MYSTERIEUSE, LES NAVIGATEURS DE L'INFINI. By Ernest Pérochon: LES HOMMES FRENETIQUES; by Charles Derennes: LE PEUPLE DU POLE; by H. Régis: L'ECLIPSE; by Théo Varlet and André Blandin: LA BELLE VALENCE; by the same Varlet: LA GRANDE PANNE; by S. S. Held: LA MORT DU FER. The Held book only has been translated into English. Hope this will satisfy you.

Vo, not at all, that doesn't satisfy me. I know fairly well French sf. what I wished to know was : are there French stf books translated into English ? See, those titles above are all very good, save the Held book which is only fair. And this Held book would be the one you have in English ? Shame upon your publishers, fen, and shame upon you if you don't know books which are as good as the better American and English ones. Though you know the way. It's the way the Linards and us Versins took. Having read all of what is worth reading in French. we wanted more and learned English, as to read English books ('cause, you see, when I say : shame upon your publishers, I must add: shame upon OUR publishers too. They don't either translate the best of what you have, though the last titles of Georges H. GAL-LET's Collection, LE RAYON FANTASTIQUE, are no less than (hold your breath, fen !) : THE MOON POOL, THE METAL MONSTER, THE LEGION OF SPACE, THE MAN WHO MASTERED TIME, FOUNDATION and maybe the sequels, SHAMBLEAU AND OTHERS. and MORE THAN HUMAN. Yes, after all, we have luck, we French. But alas, poor yorselves, where is the publisher who will give you such wonderful yarns like CIEL CONTRE TERRE, L'AGE ALPHA, LE VOYAGEUR IMPRUDENT, and so on, and a book which is maybe as good as LAST AND FIRST MEN : VOYAGE AU PAYS DE LA QUATRIEME DIMENSION, which was pubbed in 1912 !..

Bah! be quiet, old versinian Pete, this is a Vacation Issue.



Uh, this is the place to give you a quote from STUPEFYING STORIES No 24, the intermittent letter-substitute of Dick ENEY

## VOTE FOR HIM IF IT'S NOT TOO LATE

who says (no, it's Harry WARNER who says):

Besides (it was about a French fanzine distributed thru FAPA, remember?), by the time

Pierre works up to the top of the waiting

list there'll be time for us TO ORGANIZE

FRENCH CLASSES FOR FAPA. (Capitals mine)

h? What did I say on former page? You'll come to this, fen, slowly, but surely. And then, maybe France will be no more a mere side-light for civilisation.

Deing with Dick, I must thank him muchly for 4 FFMs and FNs which he sent to meversins. Here are their numbers, to add to the list I gave in ffm ending number two: FFM oct. 52 & dec. 52 - FN sep.49 & jun. 51.

And by the way, I received the other day 2 Ballantine Novels from an unknown sender. Who is he or she? The packet came from Brooklin. Anyway, I thank the person, since anonymous packages are not like anonymous letters: I don't throw them away. I KEFP them, beware.

Thow! Martine reminds me that I promised to explain why I don't comment on fanzines. That is an idea. But a better idea is to comment on Larry STARK's STELLAR, where I found something which is of interest TO ME at least. Please, sit down and listen. Anyway, this was in STELLAR No 1, maybe I'm too late, but I never bother in this case, I have some eternity in front of me.

LARK OF SPACE No 1, is a letter from V.L. McCAIN. My complaint, over the years, has been that there is no excuse for printing anything in a fanzine which could (if sufficiently well plotted and written) sell to a prozine. Fanzines should not be the place for the prozine reject or imitation.

Excuse me, peaple, but this interests me most, because I'm a filthy pro. And I have something to say against this statement. Do you think, for instance, that it is

enough, when a story is concerned, that it were well plotted and written to be accepted by a prozine ? Is that enough in USA ? Or in England ? Because in France, it's not enough at all. I would like to have opinions about this, opinions from every country where go my ffms. Because my idea is that that is not enough, and by far! A short, a novelet, or a novel hasn't the need to be good to be sold, you no doubt know this, else you'd read only the products of genius' pregnancy. It is only necessary that it took proper care of public sentiments and don't hurt too much reader's ideas. And we learn in school (do you learn this too ?) that a good novel is good only when there was nothing of the sort before. You see ? And what, now ?

But that is not the main part, because this goes for all countries. What is worse is when there exist not enough zines, to buy stories. Do you ever think of the situation of French sf authors? There are exactly TWO sf magazines, FICTION and GALAXIE. And these two, being lil brothers of respectively THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE-FICTION and GALAXY, are bound to buy more stories from USA than from France. Hence a writer who writes more than four or five short stories in a year can keep'em for posterity. And with luck, I assure you. I don't know a French writer who sells more than three stories a year.

As for novels, it's maybe worse (if something can be worse): there are three collections in France, four maybe. Among these four, one has printed 4 French novels for 44 English or American, the other 5 for 15 (and in these 5, only 3 are sf, the two others being fantasy). As for the remaining two collections they publish only juveniles.

h, Pete! Pete! Can't you remember that THIS is a Vacation Issue?

 $\mathcal{J}_{ ext{think I'm hopeless,}}$  or else I'd know.

Hell, I'll end this Flaccid Flail, as a flail, methinks it's really too flaccid. And you?

Bye for the present. Turn the page, and maybe you'll find something, but I promise nothing ...

After all, you'll have something on this page.

Jhe JABLE 9J CONJENJ

Jou have read on page 1 why I wasn't to pub an August issue and that we versins are about to receive the only Li-

nards in the world.

n page 2 was the end of the beginning, my name and address, and some egoboo for my own self, from Archie MERCER

and Joe SANDERS.

On page 3, beginning on page 2
tho, was Jean YOUNG blushing and rushing with me to BLUSHINGLAND and writing about

Shadows and, on page 4, going on with shadowy things and, and giving ME a piece of wonder (which I was kind enough to LEMD)

you).

On page 5 there was a suggestion by John CHAMPION about stories by JeanY, emendation by same John to Ron ELLIK's fibbing, and the silly nightwares this job of French Fandomenum gives me every

night.

On page 6, John went on with
Ron's assassination, gave fake titles of
French sf through courtesy one F. BORDES
of Seine (hmmm, what a name!) and one

of Seine (hmmm, what a name!) and one

Mr. MILLER, which I emended

And kept emending on page 7 where John gave us then fair titles of
French sf, which I didn't emend, me giving advices to you fen who won't care

and sleeping as to be quiet.

n page 8, I used Dick ENEY's
STUPSTORIES as to push yourselves to
learn French, and followed Martine's

counsel hich I indeed followed till the end of this ffm ending number four,

 $\mathcal{A}$  nd on page 10, just follow

the

arrow

Fen, I get your zines with a regularity which tells most about your kindness.

Please, keep on sending them to me. I get'em, read'em, like'em, love you and be the sames, oh, please, be the sames.

Here are those for the month of July :

EXCELSIOR 3

Larry SHAW

SIRIUS 7

Walter WEGMANN

FANTASIANA july 57

Mike MOORCOCK

BURROUGHSania 14

The Same

RETRIBUTION 4

John BERRY

RETRIBUTION 7

The Same

CONTOUR 11

Bob PAVLAT

OOPSIA 21

Gregg CALKING

INNUENDO 3

Dave RIKE & Terry CARR

YANDRO vol V No 6

Buck & Juanita COULSON

PLOY 9

Ron BENNETT

SCIENCE-FICTION TIMES 273

James TAURASI

GALLERY 5 & 6

Chick DERRY

YANDRO vol V No 7

Buck & Juanita COULSON

A FANZINE FOR SUSAN MARGARET

Jean YOUNG

YE BOSSTON BOY BIRDWATCHER'S BUGLE-BLAST

SHAWS, STARK & YOUNGS

STELLAR 1

Larry STARK

STELLAR 2

The Same

STELLAR 3

The Same

STUPEFYING STORIES 24

Dick ENEY

